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JAZZ FIRE WITH CHRIS BOTTI

10 HOT LICKS FROM DENNIS CHAMBERS

AVENGED SEVENFOLD'S "THE REV"

GARY CHESTER
THE NEW BREED FOREVER

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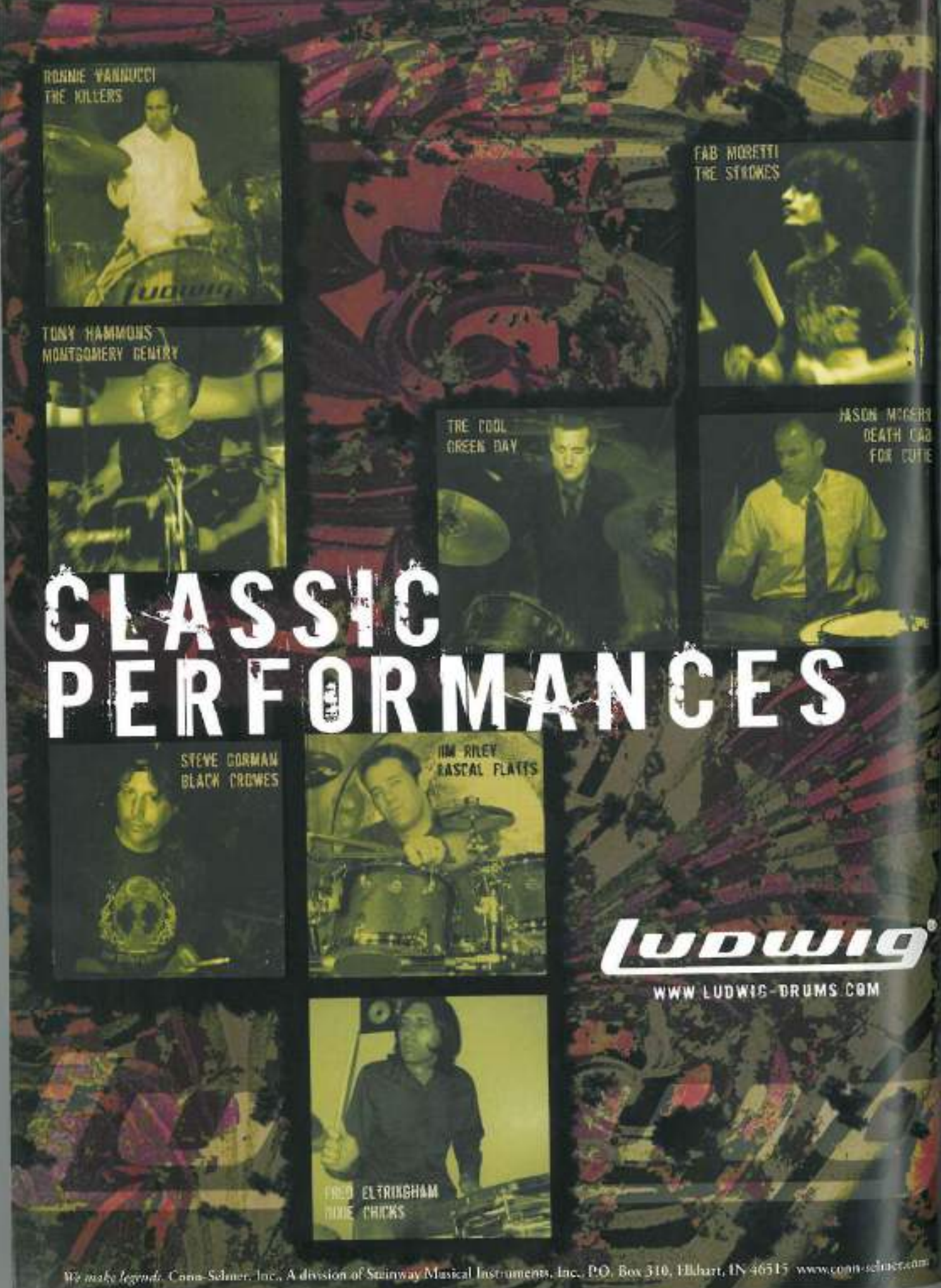

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Avedis Zildjian III and Armand Zildjian (left) preparing to pour castings.

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Chris Adler
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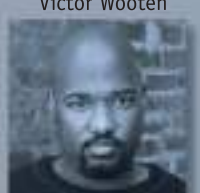

Chad Butler
"Switchfoot"

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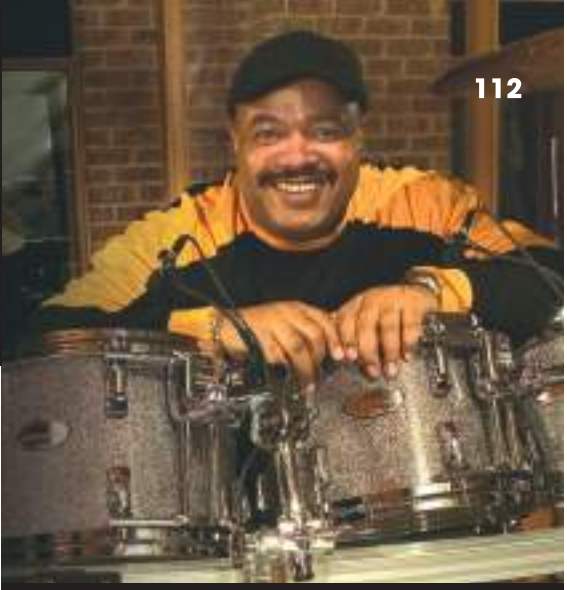

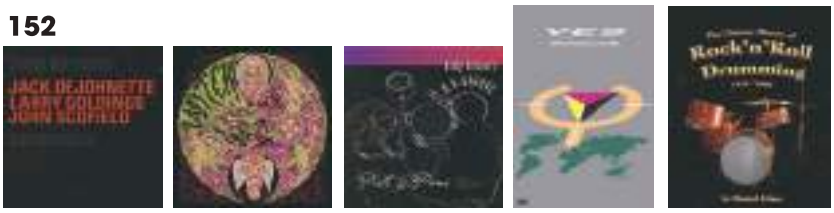

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Hello It's Me

How are you? Hope everyone's summer is going well. We're all in Festival mode here at *MD*, getting ready for our big show (September 16–17, at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark, New Jersey). I always look forward to this time of the year, since the MD Festival weekend features great performances by *the* greatest drummers in the world. It's also a time when we get together with our industry friends, and when we get to meet many of our readers.

That's also what I love about the Internet. If cyberspace keeps growing at its current rate, in the future, everyone will know *everyone*. The world is getting smaller, or, as I like to think of it, closer. This is the only kind of global warming I don't mind. What a great networking tool the Internet is, allowing us to stay in touch with friends from around the corner or around the world.

In that regard, *MD* recently joined MySpace.com (www.myspace.com/moderndrummermagazine), and the response has been overwhelming. We'll admit, we don't mind all the support and kind words you've been sending. But the best part for me—besides making new friends—is discovering some great drummers. I personally dig sharing You Tube clips, reading blogs and journals, checking out photos, and just dropping a line to let someone know, "Hey, I heard your music, and I dig it!"

So, stop by, say "hello," mix it up with our friends, and let us know what you're up to. We may not be able to respond to every single email, but we answer as many as we can, and we read every one. And trust me, we *will* be listening. Enjoy the rest of the summer. I'll talk to you in space.

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Volume 30 Number 10

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Thanks From Steve & Neil

I offer my sincere thanks to the readers of *Modern Drummer* for naming me a winner in this year's Readers Poll. This is an honor.

It's great to know that people appreciate what you try to do. I just try to keep my heart, mind, soul, and spirit in the right place. I've learned a lot from all the great musicians who have come before me, via books, recordings, or actual first-hand experience. Hopefully, I'll continue to learn. Thanks again, and peace. **Steve Jordan**

Rob Shanahan

When I first heard that the *Modern Drummer* Readers Poll had awarded me with triple honors for rock drummer, recorded performance, and educational DVD, I felt a heady mix of emotions. Pleasure, foremost, and certainly surprise, mixed with a little unworthiness. In time, that combination of reactions added up to a pure sense of *gratitude,* at having my work be so appreciated by people, especially other drummers.

"The praise of the praiseworthy," I call it.

Danny Carey

Thanks for your July cover story on Danny Carey. Danny's playing with Tool has been creative and inspirational from the beginning, but his work on *10,000 Days* takes things to an entirely new and impressive level. It was a great to read Danny's own description of how that album came about.

Now, Danny, about that instructional DVD.... **Tom Jenkinson**

Andrew MacNaughton

If anyone thinks a person ever gets "used to" being honored, or winning awards, and doesn't really care too much, I'm here to tell you that it's not so. There are few feelings in life that equal being appreciated, and you can never get enough of it. Plus, genuine appreciation has the quality to endure, and I still feel a warm glow when I think about those three honors.

To all those who voted for me, thank you most sincerely. **Neil Peart**

Danny Seraphine

I'm seventeen, and Danny Seraphine is one of the reasons I play drums. His recordings with Chicago feature some of the most inspired drumming I've ever heard. I was amazed at the story of his departure from the band, and very impressed with how he handled himself after such a letdown. It gave me inspiration for when I'm feeling insecure about my own playing. **Nico Lembo**

In his July interview, Danny Seraphine says he started taking lessons after his

Alex Solca

Chicago bandmates criticized his playing. *Pardon me?* To this day, when I listen to early Chicago music, I'm amazed at Danny's varied and beautifully executed fills, which perfectly complemented the music. His technique, phrasing, and overall creativity are mind-boggling.

Later in the story, Danny says he was overwhelmed when he started playing live with his new band, and discovered that people remembered him. Danny, it is impossible for anyone who has listened to your playing with Chicago to *forget* you. Maybe the next time you're hanging out with the Steve Smiths and Greg Bissonettes of the world, you'll realize that you're among peers. **Jeff Goodman**

Fresher Fills

I was inspired by Jeremy Hummel's July article on coming up with fresher fills. Being rather a beginner myself, I'm sure that Jeremy's advice will positively affect my playing and help me to develop my own style. **Isaac Beracha**

Steve Hass

Thanks so much for the feature on Steve Hass in your June issue. I've been listening to Steve's drumming since his start with Ravi Coltrane and House Of Red. His ability to play exactly what any music demands humbles me. His down-to-earth attitude about himself and his work inspires me. **John Sorrento**

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Andrew MacNaughton

Neil on his kit for the Vapor Trails tour.

Neil Peart's Electronic Kick Sounds

I've been listening to the *Rush In Rio* CD, and I love the various sounds that Neil Peart achieves by combining his acoustic and electronic drums. I'm usually able to pick out what sounds are from what source, but some of the kick drum sounds have me a little baffled. I'd like to know what sources were used for the electronic kick sounds, and whether or not the acoustic drums also triggered some electronic sounds.
Howie Weinstock

We asked Neil's drum tech, Lorne Wheaton, to give us the details of Neil's electronic setup and sound selection. He replies, "Neil has used electronic percussion since the early '80s. I introduced the Roland V-Drums into the 360° kit when we recorded *Vapor Trails* in 2001. What you heard on the *Rush In Rio* disc would have been the V-Drum kick pad through a Roland TD-10 brain, most likely using one of the stock bass drum patches. We use some of the factory sounds, as well as our own library of sampled sounds. You would hear these sounds on 'Trees,' 'Red Sector A,' and 'O Baterista.' We never trigger acoustic drums."

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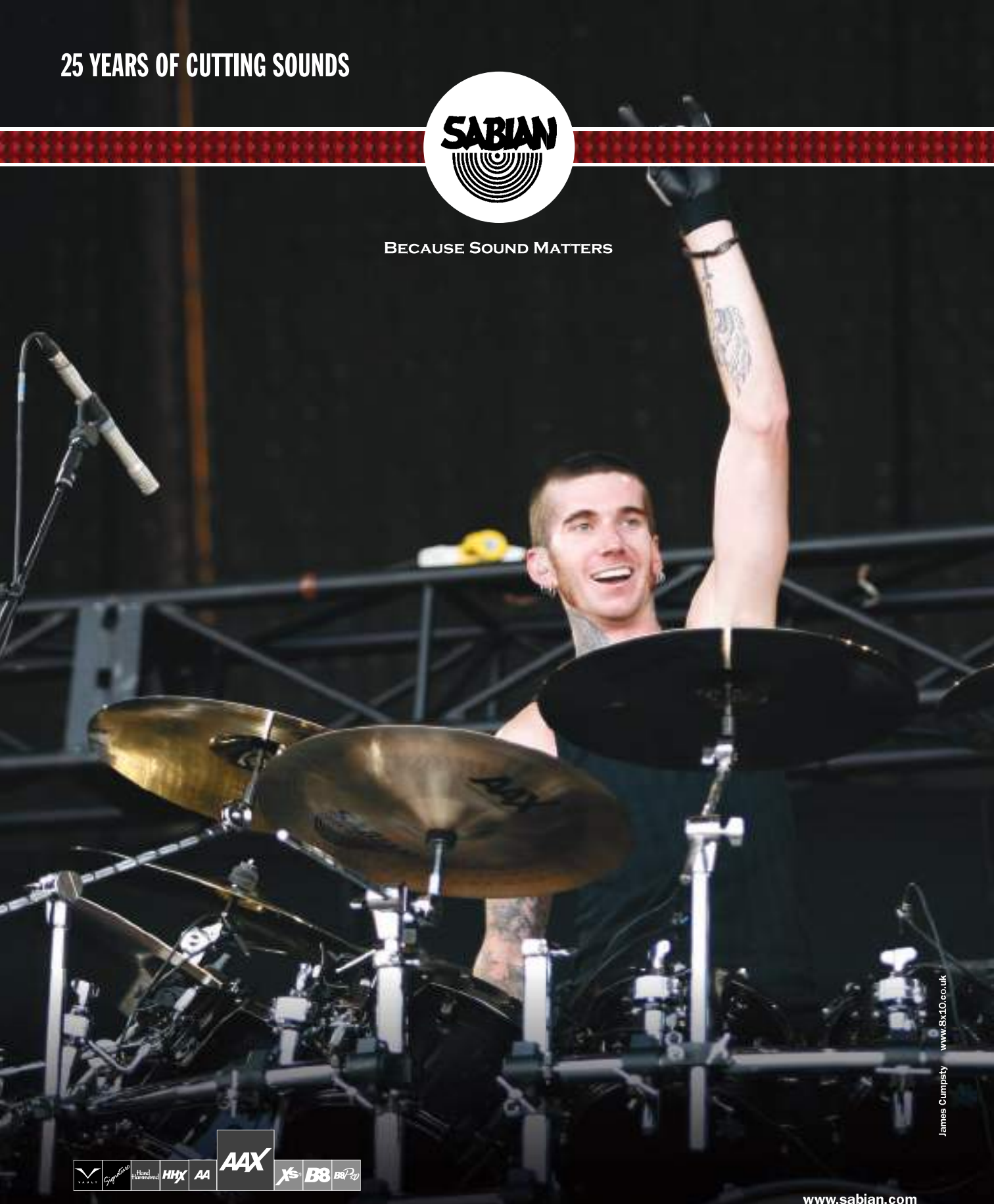

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Removing Cymbal Logos

I'd like to remove the inked logos from my cymbals. I've heard about using fingernail polish remover and paint-thinning agents. I don't want to damage the look or sound of my cymbals, so any insight you can provide would be appreciated.
William San Marco

To be honest, we get many more inquiries about how to clean cymbals *without* removing the logos. It seems as if most drummers these days want to proclaim their brand loyalties. As a result, the cymbal manufacturers have been using more and more durable inks.

Even so, most inks can still be removed using acetone (or nail polish remover, which contains acetone). However, be aware that while acetone will not damage the metal per se, it will remove any protective clear coating on the cymbal. Most companies use such coatings, even if they're not readily visible. Use the acetone sparingly, and try to stay on the logo itself as much as possible.

When using acetone or any similar product, be careful to protect your eyes and your skin. Also, wash the cymbals immediately with mild liquid dish soap and warm water to remove the residual acetone. The use of an appropriate cymbal polish thereafter is also recommended.

Keeping Drum Gear Safe In Storage

I live in a very small apartment, so my landlord is allowing me to use half of a garage to store my drums and hardware in. Garages can get damp, so I'm worried about the wood shells getting warped, and about rust developing on the hardware. The drums are in cases, and the hardware is in a couple of large storage bins. I also cover all the equipment with some old bed sheets. Is there anything more I can do to protect my expensive equipment from the elements within a garage?
Ralph Reda

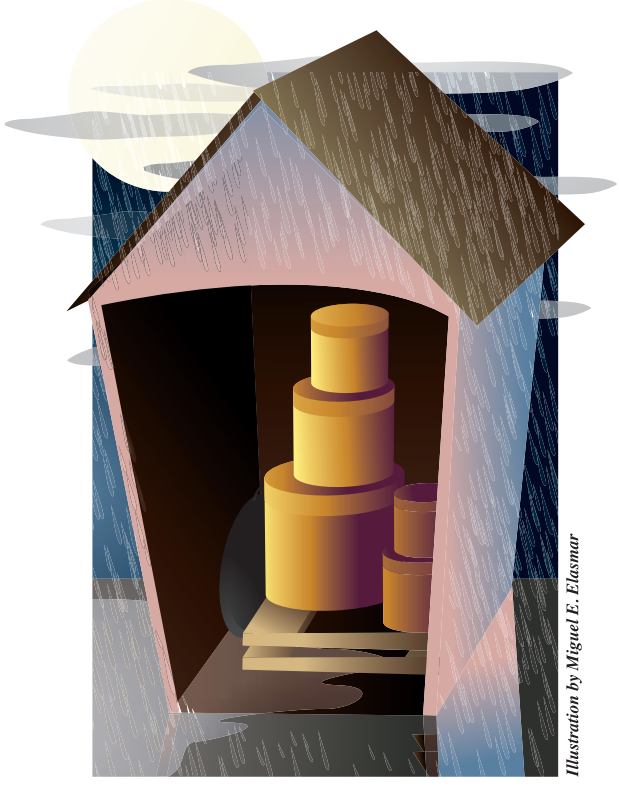

Illustration by Miguel E. Elasmar

The best way to prevent mold, mildew, and other problems that can occur in garage-style storage is to promote airflow around the drums. You don't want the cases sitting directly on the ground or concrete floor, where they can pick up dampness. With that in mind, you should store your drums and hardware containers on pallets. These can often be purchased used from industrial pallet supply companies.

Covering the drums with a sheet is good dust protection in dry weather. However, sheet fabric can absorb dampness in wetter weather. That dampness will then be held against the surfaces of your cases by the fabric. A better choice might be a plastic dropcloth, which can be purchased at home building centers. Get a dropcloth that's relatively heavy; the thin, cheap ones tend to tear easily. (Plastic drops will also protect your gear in the event of roof leakage.)

Ideally, it would be great if you could install a powered dehumidifier to control the humidity in the garage. But that may be impractical or too expensive. As an alternative, you can hang re-usable anti-dampness products (generally sold in the form of porous cloth bags filled with absorbent material) in the garage around the stored gear. You can also place small anti-dampness products (also known as desiccants) in the containers with your hardware. Check these periodically, and replace them as needed. This should help prevent moisture from collecting on and damaging the hardware. Anti-dampness products are available at home building centers and houseware specialty stores.

Questions For MD's Drum Experts?
Send them to It's Questionable, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009, or rvh@moderndrummer.com. Please include your full name with your question.

Blistering speed and killer chops are not all Travis Smith needs to pilot Trivium. Grooves this massive require gear that can stand up to the band's signature blend of metal-thrash and blast-beat mayhem. So Travis went in search of a kit that would not only lead the way through the power riffs and blinding precision, but also leave a paralyzing visual impression.

He found it with Ddrum. Dominion's select Swamp Ash shells create a furious hybrid of musical tone and ear-splitting volume. Taking it a step further, Travis combined 9 drums, 4 Deccabons, 16 rack pipes, and 400 one-inch metal spikes to create The Warrior Kit, a set-up that nightmares are made of.

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Morgan Rose's Ride

Alex Solca

Adam Leota

Q I recently went to a Sevendust concert in St. Louis, and your ride cymbal really cut through. I loved the way it sounded. I know that you play Zildjian cymbals, but I'd appreciate it if you'd describe the exact size and series of that ride cymbal. **Chris Kitchen**

A That cymbal is a 20" A Zildjian Rock ride that I've had for at least five years. Over that time it's collected many layers of blood, sweat, and...well, tons of spit. We've cleaned that cymbal twice, and both times it took a while for it to get the sound back. I don't know exactly why that is, but I do know that I'm not cleaning it anymore.

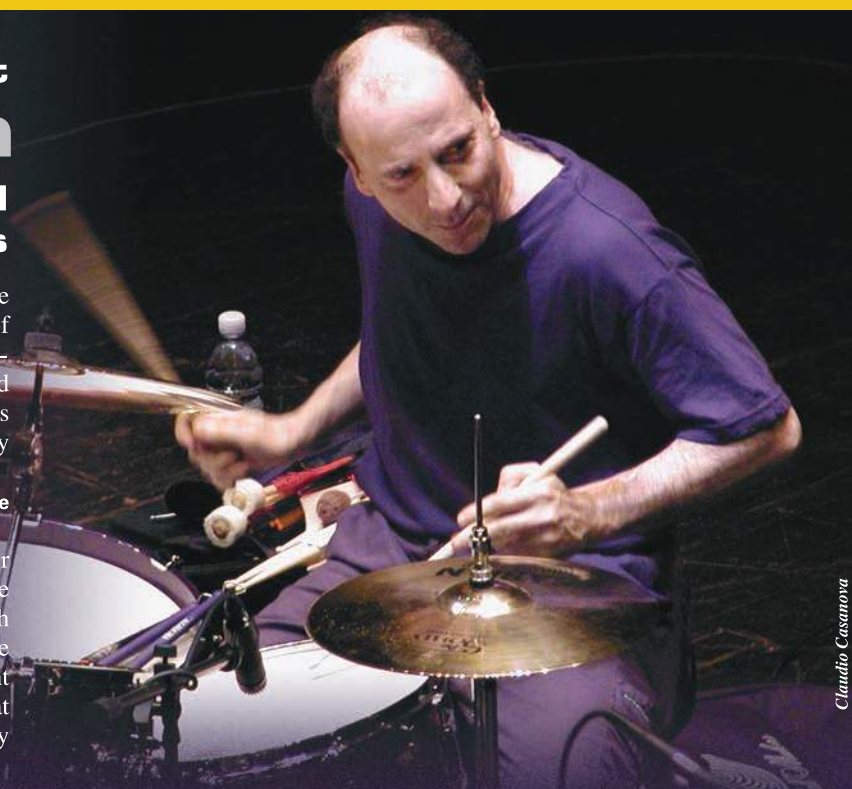
My advice is: If you like the sound of my cymbal, go get a 20" Rock ride, start spittin' on it, run around the block and then come back and drip some sweat on it, smack your hand into a few walls and bleed on it, and, most importantly, when you're finished, don't clean it. Thanx, brother.

Jazz Great

Joey Baron

On Bass Drum And Cymbal Sounds

Q You've been an immense influence and a source of profound inspiration to me. I listen to many of your works—especially with John Zorn's Masada—and I love every sound you produce on the set. I'd like to know how you produce such a big, fat bass drum sound, and what kind of cymbals (especially ride cymbals) you used on Masada's recordings.
Seraphim Fengoulis, from Greece



Claudio Casanova

A My bass drum on those recordings is a Sonor Phonic series, 18" in diameter and 14" deep. The key to the sound is the thickness of the heads. Both heads are Remo white coated Ambassadors, and there is no muffling inside of the drum. The tuning is right at the point where the tension rods are so loose that the claws almost rattle. I keep the batter head slightly looser than the front head.

That's the easy part. The rest is developing your touch and listening. You have to experiment to find what suits you.

The ride cymbal is a small Wuhan—14" or 15"—that had been cut down from a much larger size. I "tune" the cymbal by applying gaffer's tape according to how wet or dry I want the sound. The rest of the cymbals are various models made by master cymbalsmith Roberto Spizzichino. My cymbal concept—regardless of brand name or size—is to have a dry sound (ride), a wet sound (crash), and a combination of both (hi-hat). I try to get as many sounds from a cymbal as possible.

Thank you for your interest. And remember that *you* produce the sound, no matter what brand of instrument you play.

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Text and photo by Joe Perry

Place of birth: Brockton, Massachusetts
Influences: Buddy Rich, Jack DeJohnette
Up & coming drummers I like: Joel Taylor, Dave DiCenso
If I wasn't a drummer, I'd be: A history teacher
Other instruments I play: Ghatam (clay pot)
Musician I'd like to work with: John McLaughlin
Song I wish I'd played on: James Brown's "Sex Machine"
Favorite food: Indian
Favorite junk food: Scones
Favorite drink: Red wine
Hobbies/interests: Reading
Favorite recording: *Rich Versus Roach*
Favorite TV show: *Dr. Phil*
Favorite movie: *Out Of Africa*
Person I'd like to have a conversation with: Jimi Hendrix
Person I admire: My wife, Diane
Vehicle I drive: Honda Odyssey
How I relax: Hanging around the house
Most unusual venue played: John Padilla's living room
Biggest venue played: JFK Stadium in Philadelphia, with Journey, for 80,000 people

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John Walker

Disturbed's Mike Wengren
Enjoying The Ride

Around the middle of last year, Disturbed began touring behind the new album, *Ten Thousand Fists*, and they've been out on the road, nonstop, ever since. Drummer Mike Wengren says it comes with the territory. "After ten years with the band," he says, "we're happy to be so busy."

When asked how Disturbed goes about creating material, Wengren says, "When we record, the band isn't really trying to go in any specific direction. It's always just about us getting together in a room, away from distractions, and interacting and playing music together. Nothing is preconceived. Danny [Donegan] begins playing a guitar riff, and we work on a rough structure of a song. It builds from there."

Wengren says one of his favorite songs off the album is the title track, especially to play live. "It has some patterns that are more intricate than I've played in the past," the drummer admits. "When we were writing the song, it didn't have those complex parts. However, we felt the tune was missing something. We kept beating the death out of the thing, trying different ideas. One day, someone suggested that I play the intro with a straight 16th-note double kick pattern along with a syncopated tom pattern, to mimic the guitar part. I started playing it and everyone went, 'That's it!' Sometimes the best stuff comes out when I'm just letting it flow."

Another favorite of Wengren's is "Guarded," because of its combination of syncopated toms and straight kick beats, most noticeable in the outro. "I like to come up with stuff that I might not normally play," says Mike. "I like to challenge myself. We *all* like to challenge each other and take each other to the brink."

On the whole, Wengren says the band needs a solid foundation from him, and good meter. "And then it depends on the style of music. But no matter what the style, number-one has to be meter. I have to be solid."

Considering that *Ten Thousand Fists* debuted at number-1 on *Billboard's* Top 200, Wengren is elated at the band's success. "It's been an unbelievable ride. It sounds corny, but I swear I wake up every morning and I have to pinch myself." **Robyn Flans**

Sam Friedman

Nils Lofgren's Timm Biery
Coming Up With Options

Timm Biery is in the midst of a lengthy tour with Nils Lofgren, supporting the guitarists recent album *Sacred Weapon*, which was recorded at Lofgren's home in Arizona. "We tracked for about thirteen days—Nils, of course, on guitar, and Kevin McCormick on bass," says Biery. "Nils' music is so wide-ranging that it's a matter of listening to the song and choosing exactly the right thing to play, giving him options and working with tempos and feels.

"For instance," Biery says, "I have the tendency to play a little behind the beat, so we'll experiment with different tempos, rather than shifting the feel. There's a lot of thought that goes into each song—whether I'm going to use rods or brushes, or whether it will be just straight on."

Biery can also be heard on three recently reissued albums by Mahogany Rush, which he was a member of between 1981 and 1991. Of the albums *Full Circle*, *Double Live*, and *From The Hip*," Timm admits, "The first two I had only heard on vinyl. Now I can hear things on these recordings that I don't remember playing."

Biery has recently been working on a book series called *Serious Drumset*, with a multimedia CD. "The first book, *Serious Hands*, is all about hand position, holding the sticks, rudiments, exercises, and some snare drum etudes. The next two books move into drumset. They feature a series of exercises I've created to help drummers move in any direction on the set at any time." All three books will be released within the next year. **Robyn Flans**

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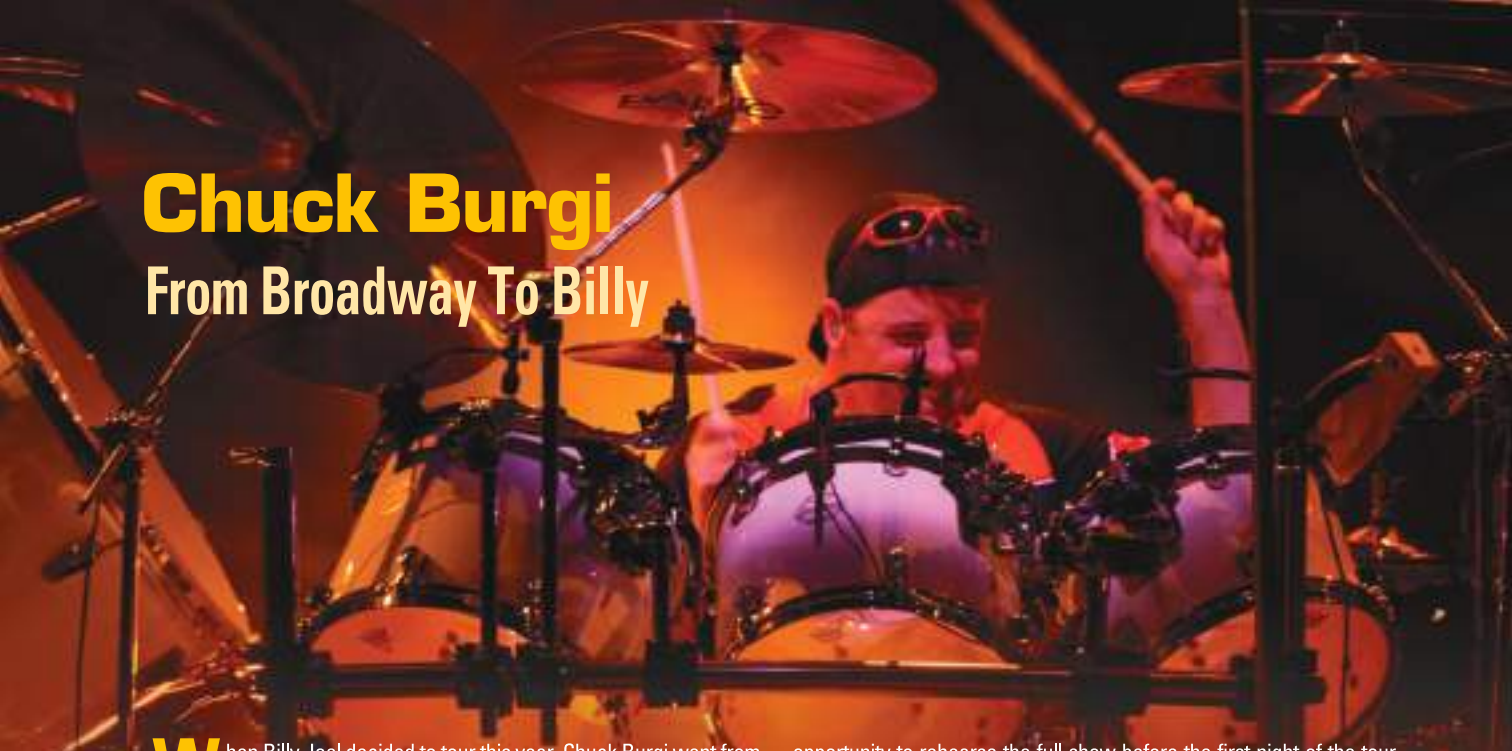

Chuck Burgi
From Broadway To Billy

When Billy Joel decided to tour this year, Chuck Burgi went from holding the drum chair in Billy's Broadway musical *Movin' Out* to being the drummer in the legendary artist's band. "There was no better way to audition for Billy than for him to come and hear me play many of his toughest songs in *Movin' Out*, hopefully with a consistency and energy that he liked. We just did the US leg of the tour, with a live CD coming out shortly, and now we're off to Europe for six weeks."

Asked what the biggest challenge is in joining a band that has had the same drummer for thirty years, Chuck says, "Billy has specific things he wants from the drums at this point. I've done arenas before, but Billy's legions of fans are fanatical, and I was aware they'd be judging me. I would have to remind myself to relax and hope people would enjoy it. I think the biggest challenge is finding myself in the music.

"There were fifty-three songs I had to know, and Billy changes them up every night," continues Chuck, who insists the band never had the opportunity to rehearse the full show before the first night of the tour. "And every show has been different," he insists. "I've been running back to the dressing room with my iPod to review songs we haven't played in two weeks."

Besides getting accustomed to the new playing environment, Chuck says he's acclimating himself to a slightly lower tuning on his Tama kit. "My tech, Jeff Chonis, and soundman Brian Ruggles like it that way," he explains. "Also, the tempos were huge issues, because *Movin' Out* had sped certain songs up. I've used my Rhythm Watch more intensely than ever before. We reprogram it every night once we get the set list."

It seems that Burgi is really enjoying the tour. "Billy is the coolest guy I've ever worked with," he says, "and he's playing and singing better than ever. People love him for all the right reasons. He makes a big show feel like you're in his living room. There are serious moments, but then we'll all be laughing and having fun. Going from Broadway to playing with Billy himself has been incredible." **Joe Bergamini**

The Blackhearts' Lee Crystal Still Loves Rock 'N' Roll

Lee Crystal, drummer for Joan Jett & The Blackhearts from 1981 to 1986, is just a regular guy from Brooklyn—except that he's so much cooler than the rest of us. In 1977, three years out of high school, Crystal formed The Boyfriends, which developed cult status for its pure, New York sound. (The band can still be heard on independent, free-form radio.) That group opened for The Ramones at renowned underground New York haunts like CBGB's and Max's Kansas City; then came stints with glitzy Sylvain Sylvain and David Johansen.

But it was in 1981, when Crystal auditioned for and subsequently landed the seat as The Blackhearts' drummer, that his uninhibited, hard rock drumming was unleashed on the world. "Joan Jett was what I needed," Crystal insists. "I wanted to play real rock 'n' roll."

Jett's music was honest and raw, and Crystal's unrelenting beat on "I Love Rock 'N' Roll" is legendary. The tune held the number-1 single spot on the American *Billboard* chart for eight weeks, and the album sold ten million copies. After The Blackhearts, Crystal played with Crash Conference and Secret Chiefs.

Diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1993, Crystal now teaches out of his home in New Jersey and is planning a "rock 'n' roll-flavored" book. The disease has slowed him a bit physically. His hands don't always cooperate, which prevents him from pounding the drums like he used to. But Crystal compensates by verbally interpreting for his students what a drummer should hear when hitting that drumhead. "You need to feel the vibration of the drum in your chest," Crystal says. "You know, oompah, OOMPAH!" Crystal's quick wit doesn't miss a beat, either. "I tell students, get real familiar with your drums—because you'll be hitting them."

Crystal stresses that it's crucial that drummers understand the basic operation of what goes into forming a solid beat. Then, make it your own. And it doesn't hurt to possess Crystal's continuing cool factor. "I'm still that rock 'n' roll guy," Crystal says, "in every way, in everything I do—my attitude, my teaching…everything." **Lois DeSocio**

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Steve Smith Change Is In The Wind

There have been some major changes lately in Steve Smith's two touring bands. "Over the past eight years Buddy's Buddies has developed a unique 'small big band' sound and direction," Steve explains. "We've moved away from exclusively playing music associated with Buddy Rich to music that is dedicated to the legacy of many great jazz drummers. We've also been playing original music that is allowing the band to evolve with its own voice. Pianist Mark Soskin is a prolific writer and arranger and has been adding exciting original compositions and arrangements to the book."

In September of 2005, Steve Marcus, who had spent twelve years with Buddy Rich and was the tenor player in Buddy's Buddies, sadly and unexpectedly died. With saxophonist Walt Weiskopf joining the band in his place, Smith feels they've now got another strong composer and arranger who is already adding great charts to their repertoire. According to Steve, "We could see that we had outgrown our original concept and that a new band was born. With that in mind, we agreed on Steve Smith's Jazz Legacy as a fitting name for the group." Alongside Steve, Mark, and Walt are Andy Fusco on alto and Baron Browne on bass.

There are also changes in the Vital Information lineup. After eighteen years as an integral member of the band, Frank Gambale has left to spend more time developing his solo career. Stepping into the band is New York–based guitarist Vinny Valentino. Valentino had toured with them in 2004, when Gambale was called away on an urgent family matter just two weeks before the start of a European tour. "Valentino was the logical choice to step in on guitar and bring new energy and ideas to the band," Steve says. "He's a world-class improviser and composer, swings hard, has a beautiful sound, and is super funky. Tom Coster, Baron Browne, Vinny, and I are already working on new music for an upcoming Vital Information recording."

On a personal note, last New Year's Eve, Steve and longtime girlfriend Diane married after being together for twelve years. And they've moved to Manhattan. "We love the energy, music, culture, and food," Steve says. "Change is definitely 'in the wind' for me, and it feels good."

During September and October, Smith will be touring the East and West Coasts with Steve Smith's Jazz Legacy, including a stop at the 2006 Modern Drummer Festival. "I'm *really* looking forward to that one." **Robyn Flans**

Andrew Lepley

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Every Time I Die's
Michael Novak Jr.
Lucky To Be Alive

Adam Leota

The members of Every Time I Die are "lucky to be alive," says their drummer, Michael Novak Jr. While touring earlier this year, the innovative metal-core band was driving through mountains in Wyoming when their van skidded on a patch of ice and flipped over. "I woke up to someone yelling, and I was flipping backwards and hearing smashes," Novak recalls. "The trailer carrying our equipment jack-knifed the van, and we tumbled. It could have been worse. We could be missing someone right now." Novak reminds us that drummer John "Beatz" Holohan, of the band Bayside, was killed in a van accident "on pretty much the same strip of highway."

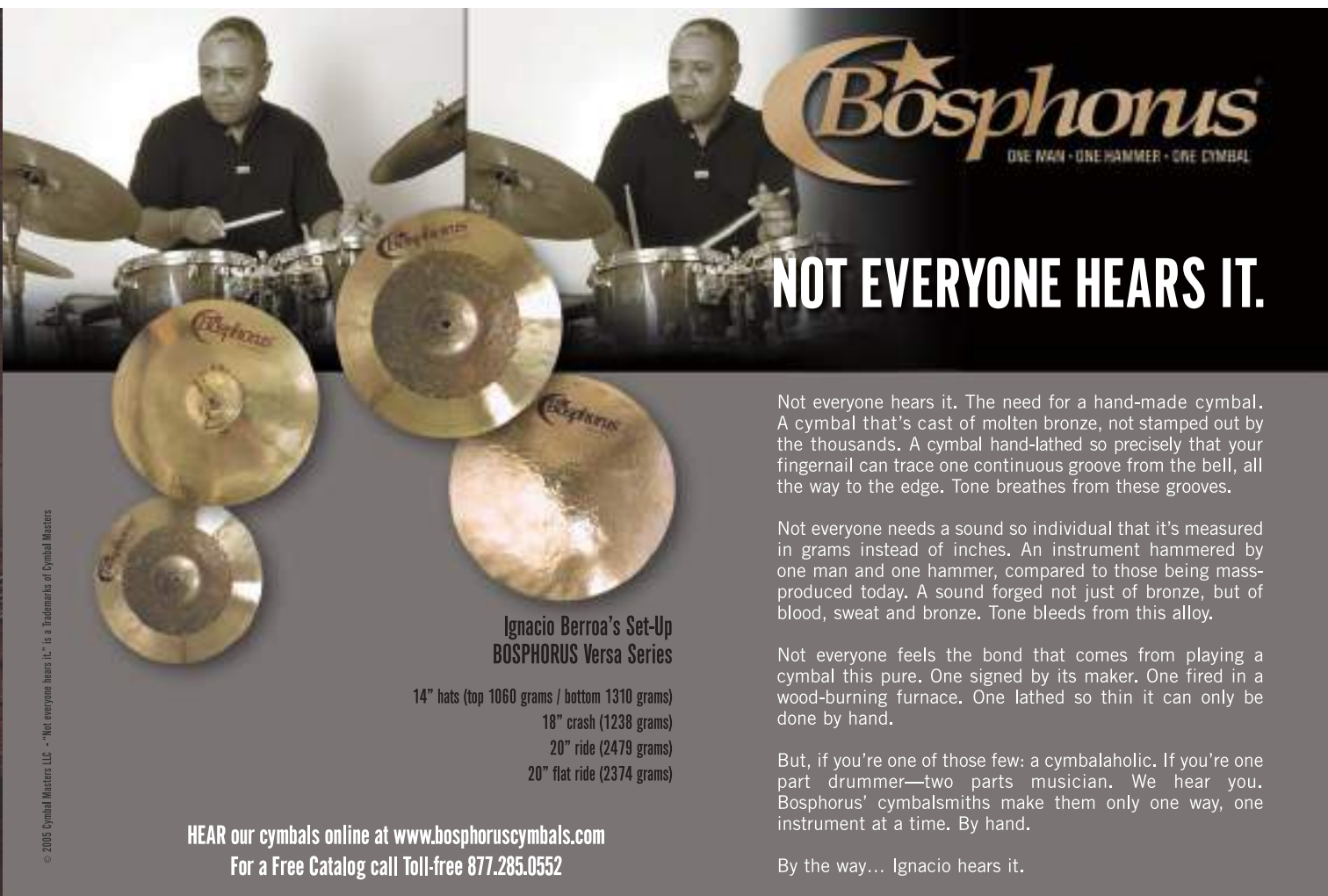
Although no one was seriously hurt during E.I.D.'s accident, Novak sustained a minor shoulder injury that luckily hasn't affected his playing. "It gets really sore when I move it in weird positions," he explains, "like when I sleep on it funny. But I've been perfectly fine to play." Playing drums also might have helped him avoid a more serious injury, he believes. "Maybe the motion of drumming had something to do with it."

Despite the setback, E.I.D. were able to finish touring their fourth album, *Gutter Phenomenon*, an adrenaline-fueled mixture of hardcore, screamo, thrash metal, jazzy nuances, Southern grooves, and raw, upbeat rock 'n' roll. On "Champing At The Bit," Novak offers a slew of odd time changes, yet for the most part, "I wanted to keep more of a meat & potatoes vibe on this record," he notes. "More beats than technicality, I guess. I'm pretty rock-influenced. I feel that AC/DC's Phil Rudd did it right."

Novak has also tackled his fair share of technical, "all-over-the-place" drumming, but his stripped-down approach is an indication that "we've matured." Complementing his style is his trusty four-piece Pork Pie drumkit. When it comes to gear, he says, "I feel simple is better. I don't use double bass."

Novak hasn't completely gotten over his band's frightening van accident. "It's definitely kind of fist-clenching when we get into the van again and the weather is bad or we hit some ice," he admits. The accident, however, has also left Every Time I Die's drummer striving to "live every day to the fullest."

Jeff Perlah



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NEWS

Mark Schulman has been touring with Pink.

Congratulations to **Stanton Moore** on being signed by Telarc Records. The company is about to release a new solo album from the Galactic drummer, *III*.

Rich Scannella is touring with John Eddie. Check out www.richscannella.com and www.johneddie.com for more info.

MD scribe **Waleed Rashidi** tears it up on the new release by Revolution Mother, *Enjoy The Ride*.

Vigen Sayadian is on Slow Motion Reign's self-titled debut album.

Nick Mason is on *Pulse*, a two DVD set of Pink Floyd's 1994 tour, which includes the only filmed performance of *The Dark Side Of The Moon* in its entirety.

African drummer **PAA Kojo Konduah Amos** is playing with Evangelism group Joyful Way Inc. in Ghana.

Heavy metal drummer **Tracy Thornton** has evolved into a steel drum musician. His current CD is titled *Pan For Punks: A Steelpan Tribute To The Ramones*. For more info visit www.panforpunks.com.

Jeff Simon is on George Thorogood's new one, *The Hard Stuff*.

Lee Finkelstein has been touring with The Blues Brothers.

Steve Jordan is on tour with Eric Clapton.

Congratulations to Britt and **Aaron Comess** on the birth of their daughter, Stella Louise.

Darren Dodd is on the latest from Butch Walker, *The Rise And Fall Of Butch Walker And The Let's-Go-Out Tonites*.

?uestlove is on tour with The Roots, promoting their new releasae, *Game Theory*.

Congratulations to **Rick Marotta**, who recently received an ASCAP award for most-performed TV theme song for *Everybody Loves Raymond*, which he wrote.

Lil' John Roberts is currently playing with Frankie Beverly & Maze.

Former Spyro Gyro drummer **Richie Morales**' son **Jacob** is following in his dad's footsteps. Jacob's band, The Element, recently cut an EP and has been playing around NYC.

MD contributor **Ed Breckenfeld** is on the new concert DVD by Pride Of Lions, *Live In Belgium*. The group features Jim Peterik of Survivor fame.

Congratulations to Bonnie and **Mike Mangini** on the birth of their son, Alec Michael.

DRUM DATES This month's important events in drumming history

Cozy Cole was born on 10/17/06, **Papa Jo Jones** on 10/7/11, and **Art Blakey** on 10/11/19. (He passed away in October of 1990.) **Ed Blackwell** was born on 10/10/29 and passed away on 10/7/92. **Billy Higgins** was born on 10/11/36, **John Guerin** on 10/31/39, and **Keith Knudsen** on 10/18/52.

Billy Gladstone passed away in October of '61, **Gene Krupa** on 10/16/73, **Al Jackson** on 10/1/75, and **Mike Gibbons** of Badfinger on 10/4/05.

On 10/24/47, pianist/composer Thelonious Monk records "Well, You Needn't" at his first trio session with bassist Gene Ramey and drummer **Art Blakey**.

On 10/5/68, Cream (with **Ginger Baker**) begins their farewell tour. Twenty-seven years later, on 10/24–26/05, the super-group reunites at New York City's Madison Square Garden.

In October of '72, while on tour with Beck, Bogert & Appice, **Carmine Appice** releases *Realistic Rock*, which goes on to becomes one of the best-selling drum books of all time.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Earl Palmer (studio legend): 10/25/24

Paul Humphrey (session great): 10/10/35

John "Jabo" Starks (James Brown): 10/26/38

Roger Hawkins (Muscle Shoals studio legend): 10/16/45

Mike Clark (Headhunters): 10/3/46

Gary Mallaber (Steve Miller): 10/11/46

Chris Slade (Manfred Mann): 10/30/46

Trilok Gurtu (independent): 10/30/51

Tico Torres (Bon Jovi): 10/7/53

Troy Luccketta (Tesla): 10/5/59

AJ Pero (Twisted Sister): 10/14/59

Larry Mullen Jr. (U2): 10/31/61

Tommy Lee (Mötley Crüe): 10/3/62

Chad Smith (Red Hot Chili Peppers): 10/25/62

Mike Malinin (Goo Goo Dolls): 10/10/67

Aaron Spears (Usher): 10/26/76

Tony Royster Jr. (En Vogue): 10/9/84

Zak Hanson (Hanson): 10/22/85

MD RADIO

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Pacific Drums And Percussion MXR Series Drumset

Building Sound From The Bottom Up

by Kevin D. Osborne

KEY NOTES

- 100% maple construction
- Big sound, especially from the bass drum
- Professional drumheads
- Hi-hat base is wider than necessary
- No protector pad for hoop at bass drum attachment

I'll say it up front: The focal point of the new Pacific MXR drumset is its bass drum. An 18x24 kick usually must be special-ordered on kits in this price range, if it's available at all. But it's standard for the MXR kit. And there's no getting around it: A bass drum of that size makes a sonic impression.

But before we wax too rhapsodic about the MXR bass drum, let's take a look at the kit as a whole.

General Description

MXR drums are 100% maple; no filler woods are used. Along with the 18x24 kick, our review kit featured 8-ply FAST toms: a 9x12 rack tom, and 12x14 and 14x16 floor toms with legs. (An 8x10 add-on tom is available.) Also included was a 10-lug, 10-ply 5x14 maple snare. All of the drums featured excellent construction quality and workmanship.

The kit's Cherry To Black Fade matte finish looked warm and attractive. The wooden bass drum hoops match the fade, with a cherry red hoop for the batter head and a black hoop on the front. (Ebony is the only other available color for this kit series.)

There is no tom mount on the bass drum. The rack tom is intended to be "flown" from an adjacent cymbal stand. So although the bass drum is large, its thin, 8-ply shell keeps it on the light side.

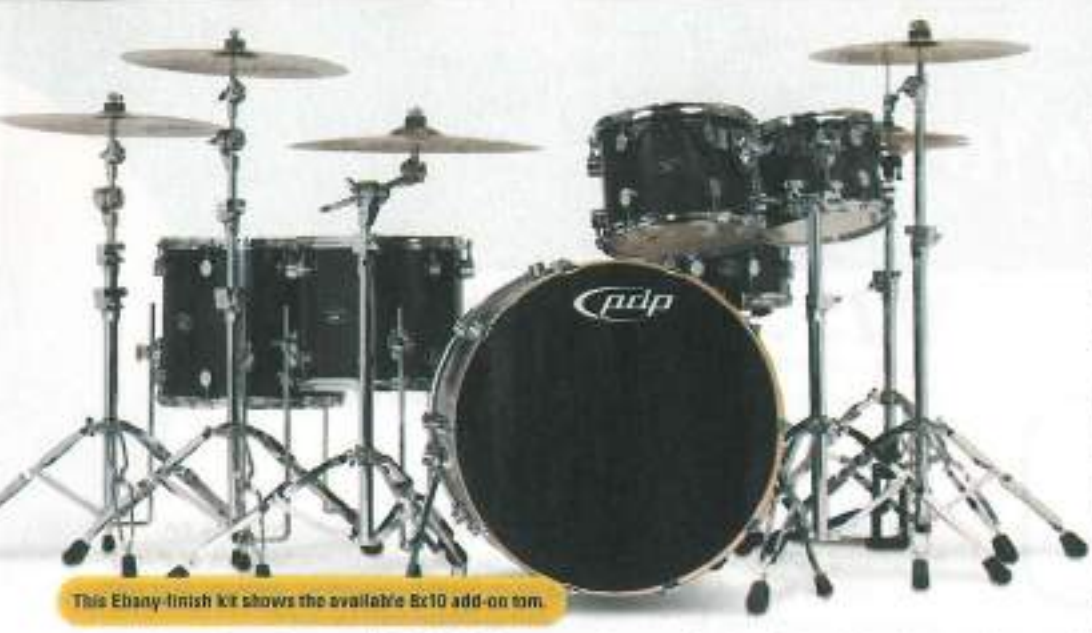
All of the drums came fitted with DW heads by Remo. Other mid-priced drums I've reviewed came with lower-quality heads, and the difference is evident. Cheap heads generally produce a cheap sound. And who wants to spend money on a drumset with heads that have to be replaced right away? I'm happy to see that Pacific thinks the same way.

The 24" bass drum is the foundation of the MXR series. Our review kit was a five-piece configuration in Cherry Fade finish.

Let's Play!

The 18x24 bass drum really moves air in the room; you *feel* this drum as much as hear it. It's got lots of boom, but without excessive ring. The drum's thin, 8-ply shell contributes to its resonance and warmth—not to mention its power. There's a rumble...a pounding...a real presence. The front head had no hole in it, yet the drum never sounded muted or choked. This big drum responds well to aggressive playing, and it will *definitely* be heard in any playing situation.

But the bass drum isn't the



This Ebony-finish kit shows the available 8x10 add-on tom.

only good-sounding drum on the MXR kit. The toms also sounded great, individually and as a group. Their graduated diameters made for very easy tuning, and they produced a good range of tones.

When suspended from a cymbal stand using an STM Pro tom mount, the 9x12 rack tom produced a mellow sound, with all that maple warmth and response. A sharp single strike produced three distinct tones. The first tone was generated by the contact of the stick with the head. It wasn't so much the stick impact as the sound of the drum itself: a very fast tonal response. This full, mellow sound was followed by the after-ring, and finally by a high-pitched overtone.

The floor toms produced the same effect, but the sound lasted longer. They also had increased depth and a fuller sound, and they set the snares to sizzling mercilessly. In fact, playing on *any* of the drums set off sympathetic overtones on the others. So it took a real effort to play them quietly. It's as if they simply didn't like it. The MXR kit is made for big sound in big music, and though you can mostly blame the big bass drum, the other drums get into the act as well.

Although 5x14 is my favorite size for a snare, I wasn't sure that it would be big enough to match the oversized sound of the MXR kit. So I had my son play the kit while I stood in front and listened. The snare produced good tone, sharp attack, and terrific snare response, as well as penetrating rimshots. You *could* use a bigger snare drum with this kit, but the 5x14 holds its own. And, in contrast to the bass and toms, the snare also sounded good at softer volumes. Lightly tapping it produced a clean, crisp sound.

Hardware

The MXR's hardware package includes 800 series straight and disappearing-boom cymbal stands, a snare stand, and a hi-hat. They all feature double-braced legs, contoured wing screws, and oversized rubber feet. Oversized memory locks feature a spring-loaded hinged design, so they're easy to get on and off of the stands.

The cymbal stands come in two sections: a lower section (with the legs) and an upper section that holds the cymbal. Both are longer than average. On the other hand, the arm on the disappearing boom stand seems somewhat short. Still, when I mounted a heavy 24" ride cymbal on it (at full boom extension), the stand was rock solid. So maybe the short boom length is a practical idea.

The snare stand offers good height range from low to high. It's fitted with a very accessible large plastic knob for adjusting the basket—nothing fancy, but good functionality.

The relatively lightweight hi-hat features a non-swiveling tripod with a large footprint. This makes for a sturdy stand, but potentially hampers the placement of other stands. The pedal connection offers four spring tension settings. It's functional and works well for splashes.

The 400 series bass drum pedal that accompanied the kit is a single-chain-drive model with a full baseplate. It's equipped with two drumscrews to secure the reversible beater, and it offers basic angle and tension adjustments. It proved to be a solid, reliable pedal that was smooth and responsive.

Accessorizing

Some of the smaller accessories included with the MXR kit deserve mention, because they're not always found on kits in this price range. To begin with, the bass drum claws are felt-lined to protect the lacquered wooden hoops (although there is no hoop protector where the bass drum pedal attaches). Tension rods have fine threads that permit precise tuning, and the washers are trapped on the top of the shank. (No more lost washers when changing heads.)

The hi-hat clutch assembly grabs and pulls firmly against the tension rod. Fine-toothed tilters on the cymbal stands permit custom angle adjustments, and are spring-loaded for user-friendly function. Floor tom legs are smooth, rather than knurled, allowing for easy height adjustments. (The hinged leg brackets still trap the legs securely.)

Finally, a muffling pillow that effectively reaches from head to head is provided for the bass drum. These may be small items, but they make a difference.

Conclusion

Pacific has gone the distance with the MXR kit: good heads, pure maple shells, solid hardware, and a nice finish. This is a drumset with a big sound that's not for the faint of heart. But if you want to drive the band with a visible and audible presence, the MXR may be the kit for you.

THE NUMBERS

MXR drumset **$1,967.99**
Includes 18x24 bass drum, 9x12 rack toms, 12x14 and 14x16 floor toms with legs, and 5x14 snare drum. Hardware package includes an 800 series snare stand, hi-hat, and straight and boom cymbal stands, and a 400 series bass drum pedal.
8x10 add-on tom **$229.99**
(805) 485-6999, www.pacificdrums.com

Meinl Mb10 Cymbals

Ready To Rock

by Will Romano

KEY NOTES

- Sound is good for rock settings
- Cutting ride cymbal bells
- Beautiful glossy surfaces
- Weak 18" crash

When I learned that I'd be playing Meinl's new Mb10 cymbal series, I was excited. I'd been impressed by the aggressive Mb20 series when I reviewed them for the December '05 *MD*. So my hopes ran high that the Mb10s would offer the same kind of wonderful playability.

Overview

Mb10s are composed of copper, tin, and traces of silver, with the tin comprising 10% of the mix. Meinl says that the sonic characteristics of this alloy give the cymbals a combination of powerful projection, warmth, and well-balanced frequencies, for "a modern and sophisticated sound."

The cymbals feature a fine-grooved lathing process that shaves off weight and thickness. This is said to allow the cymbal's sound envelope to unfold, resulting in a quicker response. The large, glossy bells are designed to give the cymbals added vibrancy.

Our review batch contained two medium crashes, two rides, a China, a pair of medium Soundwave hi-hats, and a splash. Though I wish I could have played more models from the Mb10 line, I feel that this selection provided a fair representation. Playing the cymbals as a set really put the entire series in perspective, highlighting its strengths and weaknesses.

It struck me that the Mb10 series was designed to be a middle-of-the-road line, so as to fit into an average rock setting. Can a decidedly M.O.R. sound still be spectacular—*and* worth the asking price? Let's find out.

Jason Bittner helped develop the Bell Blast ride, which has surprisingly musical characteristics

The Mb10 China might not please some purists, but it offers warm sounds that help it complement other cymbals on the kit.

Rides

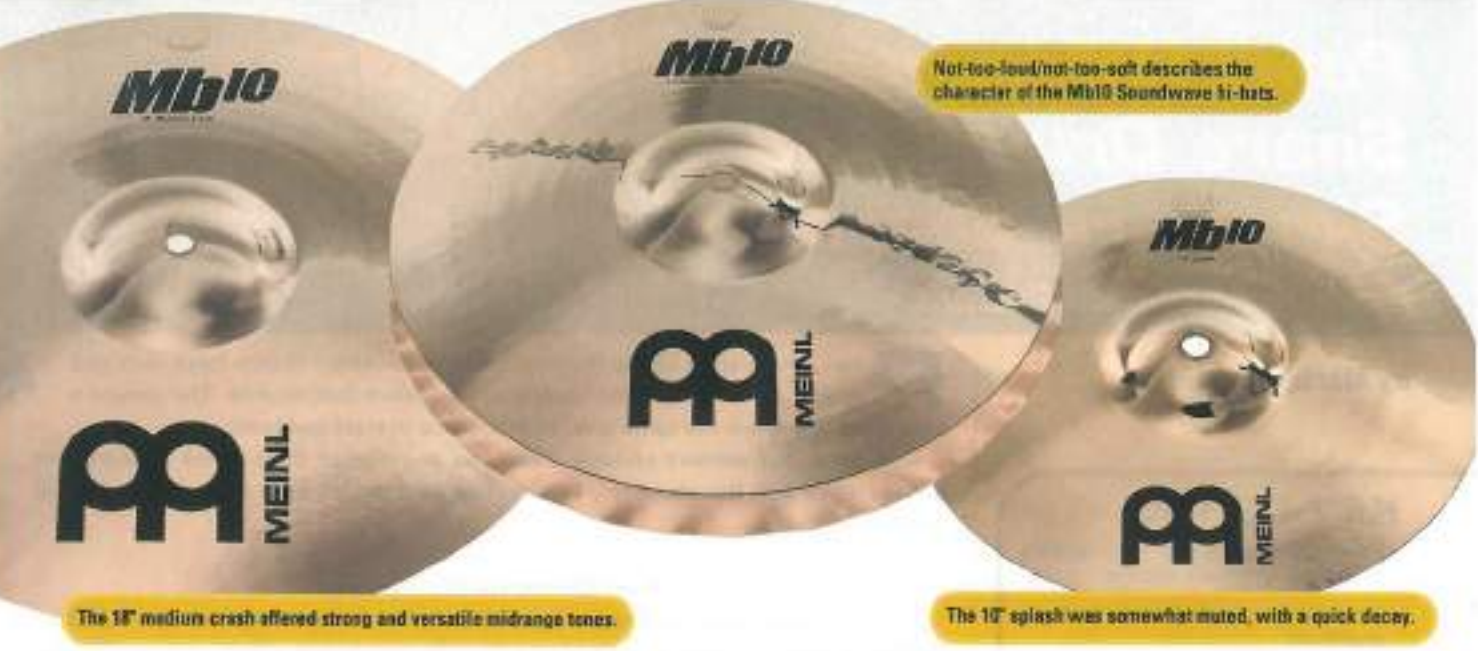
Let's take the cream of the crop first. The 20" Bell Blast ride (developed under the supervision of Shadows Fall drummer Jason Bittner) couldn't have a more appropriate name. The cymbal's polished bell is offset by the glossy, opaque, hammered-and-lathed ride surface, making the cymbal as stunning visually as it was to play.

The bell produced a ping that was clear but not overbearing. Striking the body of the cymbal created shimmering overtones and a clamorous wash. The slope between the bell and the face of the ride produced colorful tone blends—which came as a bit of shock. I'd have thought headbanger Bittner would have wanted a ride to be merciless and overpowering. Instead, the Bell Blast was warmer, more musical, and more accommodating than I would have imagined. In fact, Bittner's baby was longer on texture than on volume (though it certainly didn't lack for that, either).

The 20" medium ride offered good stick definition. It produced a distinct "tack" sound when I hit the surface, even at great speeds. The glassy platter had great spread with incredible overtones (bright *and* dark).

Splash And China

Meinl describes the 10" Mb10 splash as having "a controlled attack and a well-balanced spread." To my way of thinking, the



Not-too-loud/not-too-soft describes the character of the Mb10 Soundwave hi-hats.

The 18" medium crash offered strong and versatile midrange tones.

The 10" splash was somewhat muted, with a quick decay.

splash had an ever-so-slightly muted sound and a short decay. What bright tones it produced were likely due to its polished finish and clear bell.

The 17" and 19" Mb10 Chinas were designed to bridge the gap between smaller, high-pitched noisemakers and bigger, gong-like cymbals. It proved to be so with the 17" model in our test group. Its warm wash sidestepped the standard-issue Chinese trashiness. Because of its non-gongy characteristics, the Mb10 China came in handy when I needed a second or third crash cymbal. It also allowed me to smack away without fear of drowning out the music.

Some purists might say that this type of "tamed" performance undermines the very reason for *having* a China. I disagree. The Mb10 China's warm sonic cover was in perfect sympathy with the other, non-China cymbals of this line.

Crashes

Meinl says that the Mb10 crashes were designed for the all-purpose rock drummer. The danger in making a middle-of-the-road crash cymbal—especially in this day of specialization in instrumentation and music—is that such a cymbal can lack much-needed character.

Such was the case with the 16" medium crash. It was dark, even dull in comparison to the rest of the relatively bright, cutting Mb10s. I was expecting something a bit more forceful and colorful.

If the 16" medium crash was night, the 18" medium crash was day. It produced straightforward midrange tones that expanded in an omnidirectional sonic cloud. Unlike the 16", the M.O.R. design suits this larger platter. I played the 18" in two different rock-based settings, and it proved its worth by being sweet and not overly talkative. I'm confident that it could slip into any mid-volume rock band with no problem.

Hi-Hats

When it comes to Meinl's hi-hats, the company might be a victim of its own success. Because I was exposed to the aggressive, killer Mb20 hats in the past, the not-too-loud/not-too-soft response of the 14" medium Soundwave Mb10s paled in comparison. The sound wasn't dull or without texture, but the hats were missing *something*.

I did find that the bottom cymbal's waved edge helped to give the hats a bright, quick chick when closed with the foot. And though their volume capacity was a bit challenged at times, this limitation came in handy at others. For instance, when I played the hats open, I wasn't blasted by noise. I got the effect without the aggravation.

The Round-Up

In most cases, the Mb10s were bright, general-purpose cymbals that were a joy to play. Though I can't recommend every model in the series, several are outstanding, with unique and impressive sonic attributes.

Our review group performed well when played together, which is a tribute to the consistency of Meinl's manufacturing process. Meanwhile, their individual characteristics might make them interesting choices to blend into an existing setup. So whether you're in the market for a complete kit's worth of cymbals, or for a single new sound, you should give the Mb10s a listen.

THE NUMBERS

8" splash	$144
10" splash	$168
12" splash	$178
14" medium Soundwave hi-hats	$488
15" medium Soundwave hi-hats	$568
14" medium crash	$218
15" medium crash	$254
16" medium crash	$288
17" medium crash	$318
18" medium crash	$342
19" medium crash	$378
20" medium crash	$408
17" China	$318
19" China	$378
20" medium ride	$408
21" medium ride	$448
20" Bell Blast ride	$408

Mb10 cymbals are also available in Standard and Rock pre-packs.

(615) 227-5090, www.meinlcymbals.com

Pearl Reference Steel And Brass Snare Drums And Vinnie Paul Signature Snare

From Precision To Power

by Martin Patmos

KEY NOTES

- Reference drums are fitted with innovative strainer and snare-wire systems
- 5x14 Reference Steel offers classic steel-shell sound
- 6½x14 Reference Brass has warmth and body
- Vinnie Paul model offers unique visual and acoustic character

Pearl's Reference Series drumsets and wood snare drums have received critical acclaim for being excellent, innovative instruments. The company now aims to achieve the same level of excellence in steel and brass.

And, as if that weren't enough, Pearl has augmented their series of Signature series snares with the absolutely killer Vinnie Paul model. Let's take a closer look at these new drums.

For General Reference

The Reference Steel and Brass drums share a few features that are also found on Reference wood models. Pearl's MasterCast die-cast hoops, pivoting lugs, SR-1000 Glide Lock strainer, and UltraSound SN-1420D Graduated Tension snares all figure highly in the performance of these drums.

Even though the pivoting lugs are used on some other high-end Pearl drums, I initially viewed them only as more moving parts to hassle with. However, they lived up to their design, accepting the tension rods comfortably and evenly, and helping to provide consistent tuning around the drum.

I was really impressed by the SR-1000 snare strainer system. The Glide-Lock mechanism smoothly and quietly draws the snare wires into contact with the head, and locks them in place. A quick press of a small button on the end of the lever quietly releases the snares. Snare-tension adjustments are made in an equally efficient manner, by pressing down on the knob and turning it, then letting it lock back up in place. Altogether this system provided complete reliability for activation, consistency, and security of the snare wires in play.

The UltraSound Graduated Tension Snares presented an interesting concept, as well. The outer wires of this 20-strand set are slightly loose, while the inner ones are more taught. The idea is that the loose strands will respond to quiet play, while the tighter strands will respond as the volume increases—allowing the drum to be articulate at any volume level. This design works admirably. All of our review drums responded evenly to varying dynamic levels. The mere touch of a stick brought forth a true snare sound, while medium to loud levels of play resulted in full, lively snares.

Reference Steel

For my taste, the best steel snare drums have a bright yet dry metallic character. The 5x14 and the 6½x14 Reference Steel drums had these characteristics, which immediately placed them high in my estimation.

The thickness of the seamless cast shells actually varies from 5 mm at the edges to 2.5 mm at the center. Picture a wood drum with thin reinforcement rings, then picture it all as one solid piece of steel, and you'll get the idea. Pearl says this design extends the drums' dynamic range. The shells were flawless in construction, including immaculately clean bearing edges. The exteriors were finished to a mirror-like sheen.

In play, the 5" drum was immediate, crisp, and sensitive, with excellent response. The 6½" model had a little more body to its sound, owing to its depth. The drums were outfitted with Remo coated Ambassador batters, and they responded well to different head tensions. The 6½" drum was effective when the heads were tuned loose, producing a deep, fat, wet, backbeat. When tuned up tight, the response to stick chatter was admirable on both drums, but I especially liked the 5" drum for this, since it exhibited that snappy, dry steel character.

Both of the Steel drums were responsive to a wide dynamic range. They weren't the loudest snare drums I've encountered (which isn't necessarily a bad thing), but they each had plenty of volume and power to offer when necessary.

Reference Brass

Reference Brass shells are constructed of rolled brass, and the weld features an overlapping scarf joint for extra strength. Good luck finding that joint, though. The 3 mm-thick shell is pristinely finished, making it appear to be one solid cylinder.

The two Reference Brass drums were exemplary in performance. They're warmer and rounder in tone than the Steel snares, as well as being crisp and sensitive to sticking. The added body of the 6½" drum made it especially likeable, since it brought out a little more of the brass harmonic qualities in the drum. But the 5" had a warm, metallic pop that made it a pleasure to play as well.

The drums were equally effective at different head tensions, allowing different tonal qualities to be brought forth. Response to all dynamic levels, from ghost notes to loud shots, was consistent and smooth. Colorful tonality, dynamic presence, and phenomenal response made the Reference Brass snare drums impressive in all ways.

Vinnie Paul Signature

Some signature snare drums offer genuinely original and interesting designs and features. Others, while nice drums, amount to little more than marketing efforts. Pearl's new Vinnie Paul model definitely fulfills the presumed ideals of Signature drums. It offers an intriguing appearance and a distinctive sound, making it a worthy tribute to one of heavy metal's most influential drummers. (Spiked tube lugs and snakeskin covering are just so Vinnie Paul.)

This 8x14 6-ply maple drum possesses a voice like a cannon. It immediately led me into a medium-slow, ultra-heavy Bonhamesque groove. Yet the drum also responded well to speed, projecting an intensity and character that wouldn't stop.

Some drummers play a snare drum off-center, in order to round out the sound and bring out the harmonics. However, because of the exceptional body that the VP drum possesses, I found it most effective when played dead center.

With the batter head tuned loose and low, the VP snare was captivatingly fat—almost swampy—with lots of attitude. It could also be tuned to take on the qualities of a marching snare. But what I found most effective was a tight tuning on the heads. The combination of tight heads over a deep shell gave the drum a crisp, full sound that had a lots of volume and cutting power.

Conclusions

Pearl's Reference Steel and Brass snare drums are thoughtfully designed and well constructed. The performance capability and sound of each model was first-rate. They are pricey, but arguably worth the money. They certainly rank highly among today's crop of professional-quality metal snare drums.

Playing the Vinnie Paul snare was fun and inspiring. Some people may not go for the drum's extreme visual aspect, and not everyone can use an 8x14 snare for their musical applications. But the VP drum's extraordinary voice still makes it worth checking out.

THE NUMBERS

5x14 Reference Steel snare drum	$799
6½x14 Reference Steel snare drum	$849
5x14 Reference Brass snare drum	$899
6½x14 Reference Brass snare drum	$969
8x14 Vinnie Paul Signature maple snare drum	$469

(615) 833-4477, www.pearldrum.com

TRX DRK Cymbals

The Initials Say It All

by Chap Ostrander

KEY NOTES

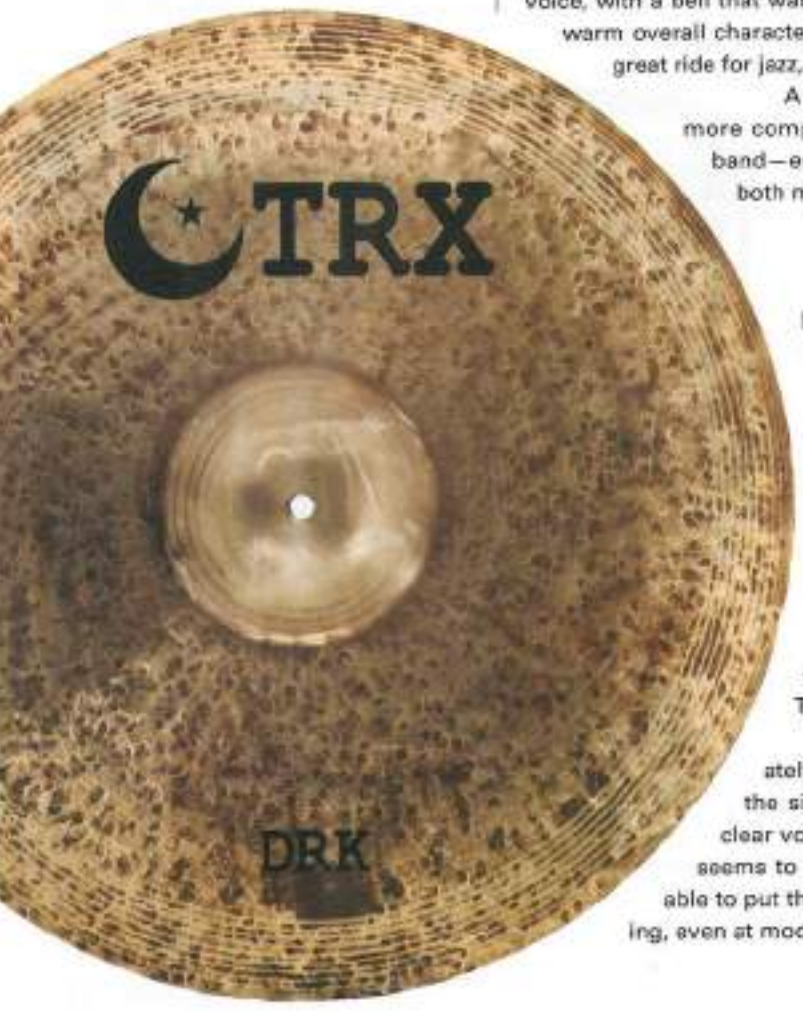
- Distinctive look and extra-dark sound
- Voices work very well together
- Subtle sonic qualities, but with lots of cut

Okay, let's get past the cutesy initials: TRX (as in "Turks") DRK (as in "dark") cymbals are one of four lines produced by yet another emerging cymbalmaker from Turkey. According to TRX, the cymbals are made using old-world techniques, but with an eye to the future. Master cymbalsmiths tailor the four cymbal lines to meet the needs of drummers across the full musical spectrum. The DRK line, as its name implies, is created to offer "an extra-dark sound."

TRX calls the alloy used to make the DRK cymbals "B20 Plus." When I asked why, I was told that the alloy starts off as B20 (20% tin and 80% copper), but during the melting process, TRX cymbalsmiths spice up the "recipe" by adding a bit more tin and a dash of silver.

All DRK cymbals are thin and light, with a low profile. This gives them a dark tonality and a relatively short sustain. The bells are unlathed and unhammered. The outer edge of each cymbal has a small band of lathing, with hammering that extends from the bell to the edge. The lathing is said to be for visual effect and to open up the sound. It's pretty minimal; you might not even notice it at a quick glance.

In keeping with Turkish tradition, the cymbals are hand-hammered, one at a time. They also have a natural finish that is heightened by what TRX terms "a proprietary aging process." Let's take a closer look.



Rides

We were sent 20" and 21" rides. (A 22" is also available.) The 20" had a dark, deep voice, with a bell that was cutting and clear. The 21" ride was darker still, offering a warm overall character and undertones that stayed under control. It would be a great ride for jazz, or for any situation where subtlety was required.

A characteristic shared by both rides was that the sound got more complex when I played the ride pattern out near the lathed band—especially at lower volumes. In addition, stick response on both models was great, even with their thin nature.

Splashes

The 10" and 12" DRK splashes were a treat. They definitely hark back to the days of genuinely thin splashes (which are hard to come by these days). I compared them to various splashes of my own, and the main difference was that the TRX splashes had a little more depth to their tonality, underpinning their initial high, bright, splashy explosion.

Crashes

Our review crashes were 15", 16", 17", and 18" in diameter. I took them on several gigs, and their performance was marvelous. Even though they all exhibited the deep, dark voice that's characteristic of the DRK series, the sound and spread of each crash still cut through distinctly. They also spoke strong and clear when I used mallets.

Due to the cymbals' thin nature, they responded immediately when struck. Their voices got correspondingly lower as the size went up, with the 18" having an especially strong and clear voice. I generally don't care much for 18" crashes, because it seems to take a lot of impact to get them moving. However, I was able to put the DRK 18" right into action. Its voice was full and long-lasting, even at moderate impact.

Chines

Our China selection included 14", 18", and 24" sizes. These cymbals embody everything you'd want in a China, including the trashy, furnace-hot sound. The voices of the smaller Chinas were easy to discern, helping them to mix in with other cymbals.

The 24" China, by contrast, was just huge in its sound—especially when played loud with sticks or mallets. It tended to dominate everything around it, which would limit its usefulness as a crash or effect cymbal. However, I'd love to hear it with a couple of rivets, used as an alternate ride.

Hi-Hats

Our review hi-hats included 13", 14", and 15" models. The sound of each pair was clean and balanced, with deep voices and great presence. Predictably, the pitches got lower as the sizes got larger.

I took the hats out with one of the rides, and the "family resemblance" created a great blend, sonically and visually. The interaction between the hats and the ride afforded me a clean, cutting sound, or a great wash, depending on what I wanted.

The DRK hi-hat cymbals would make excellent auxiliary hats, especially on a cable remote pedal unit, where they could be played open and closed. Their extra-dark tonality would provide a distinctive contrast to higher-pitched primary hats. I especially wish that we had been sent the 10" and 12" sizes, just so I could have tried them in this application. Their smaller sizes, combined with their darkness, would likely make them very interesting additions to any setup.

Wrap-Up

The TRX cymbals got noticed wherever I took them. They were striking in a visual sense, and they were more than satisfying to play. The DRK series was designed to exist outside the range of most of today's cymbals, and that goal seems to have been achieved admirably. Their look and sound definitely set them apart.

THE NUMBERS

20" ride	$450	18" crash	$350
21" ride	$475	19" crash	$375
22" ride	$500	20" crash	$400
10" hi-hats	$350	8" splash	$150
12" hi-hats	$400	10" splash	$175
13" hi-hats	$450	12" splash	$200
14" hi-hats	$500	14" China	$300
15" hi-hats	$550	16" China	$350
14" crash	$250	18" China	$400
15" crash	$275	20" China	$450
16" crash	$300	22" China	$500
17" crash	$325	24" China	$550

(818) 753-7811, www.trxcymbals.com

Puresound Percussion Metrix Snare Wires

What's The Buzz?

by Russ Barbone

KEY NOTES

- Improved overall snare sound and performance
- Affordably priced
- 40-strand set maximizes snare response, but constricts drum resonance

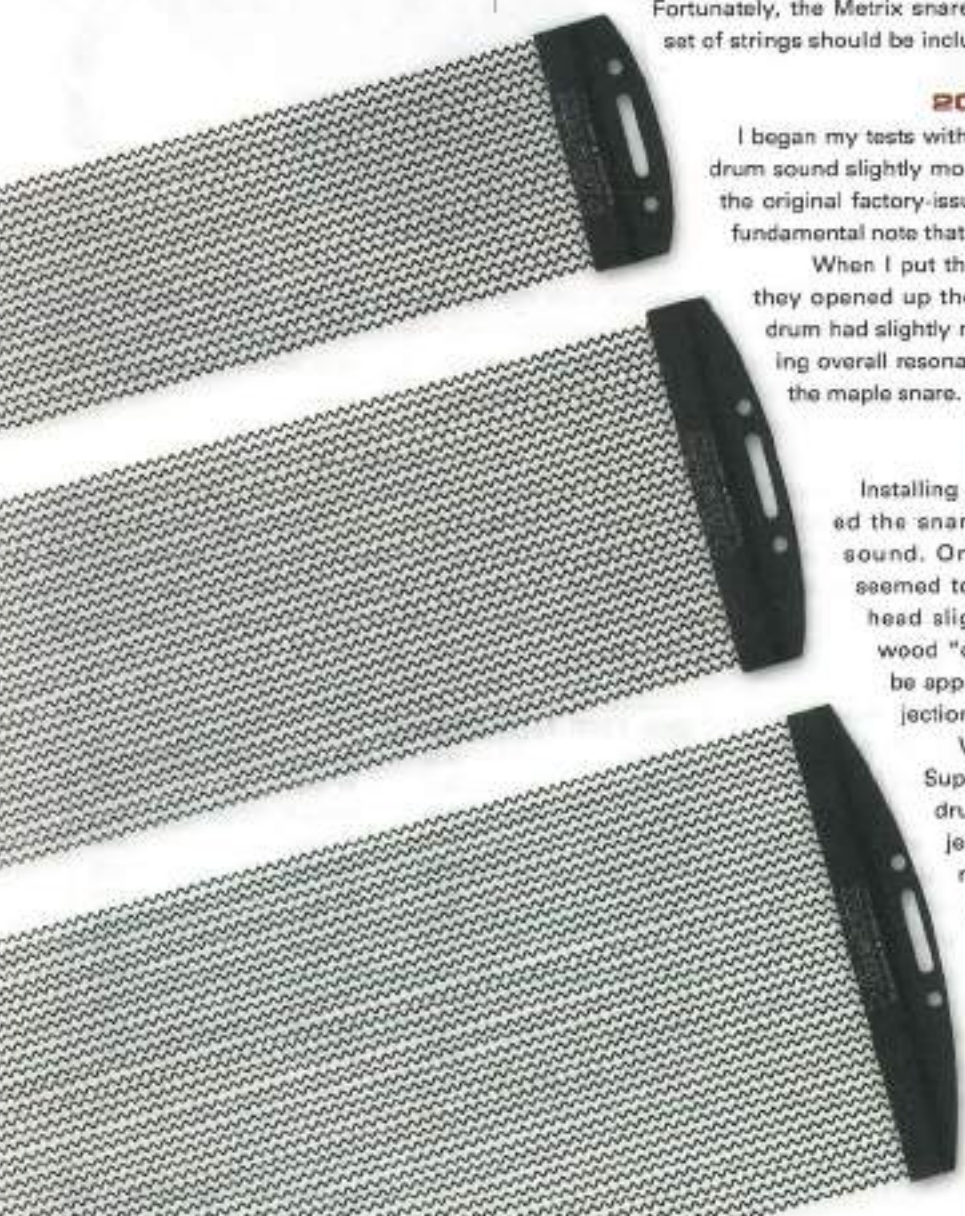
Puresound's Metrix snare wires are designed to offer the advantages of "custom" snare wires at affordable prices. They're intended to compete with low-cost aftermarket snare wires made overseas, while offering 100% American-made quality and workmanship.

Metrix snare sets are offered in 14" lengths, and in 20-, 30-, and 40-strand widths. Each set comes with two black $^1/_2$"-wide by 9"-long plastic straps to mount the unit to your snare drum.

The Test Track

I tried the Metrix wires on two Ludwig snare drums: a 5$^1/_2$x14 maple model, and a vintage 5$^1/_2$x14 Supra-Phonic 400 metal snare. In each case, I made sure to carefully install and adjust the wires for maximum symmetry on the snare-side heads.

The first thing I noticed was that both of my Ludwigs use a string attachment at the throw-off end, so I couldn't use the plastic strips that Puresound supplied. Fortunately, the Metrix snare sets also had holes for strings. Perhaps a set of strings should be included along with the straps.



20-Strand Wires

I began my tests with the 20-strand Metrix set. It made my maple drum sound slightly more articulate and pronounced than it did with the original factory-issue Ludwig snare wires. There was a cleaner fundamental note that was slightly drier, with fewer overtones.

When I put the 20-strand wires on the Supra-Phonic 400, they opened up the drum's legendary punchy character. The drum had slightly more metal bite and attack, with a very pleasing overall resonant aura that sustained a little longer than did the maple snare. Projection was simply stupendous.

30-Strand Wires

Installing the 30-strand set on the maple drum boosted the snare response, creating a "buzzier" overall sound. On the other hand, the extra ten strands seemed to constrict the resonance of the snare-side head slightly, which made the drum's underlying wood "crack" a little more pronounced. This might be appealing in a studio environment. A bit of projection was also lost.

When the 30-strand set was installed on the Supra-Phonic snare, I could discern more of the drum's metallic bite and attack. Here, too, projection dropped a little, making the drum a bit more controlled. Snare response was also more evident than with the 20-strand model.

40-Strand Wires

Switching to the 40-strand set on the maple drum dramatically upped the ante on the snare response factor. It also constricted the drum's projection. Because the 40-strand set is a full 4" wide, it cov-

ers a lot of the snare-side head's surface area. This, in turn, inhibits the head's resonance. So you get a drier overall drum sound, but with more snare response by virtue of the extra wires.

It was much the same with the 40-strand set on the Supra-Phonic drum: more snare sound, less projection, and an effect like turning up the treble control on your audio system.

As might be expected from such a large snare unit, the 40-strand set made both of my snare drums prone to "snare buzz" caused by sympathetic vibrations when nearby toms were struck. This might not be much of a problem in a loud live situation, but it could prove very annoying in a recording environment.

Conclusion

Upgrading to custom-made snare wires can be an effective and inexpensive way to improve your snare drum's sound. Puresound has made this process even more affordable with the Metrix series. They're well made, they sound good, they come in sizes to suit a variety of applications, and they're priced to move. Recommended!

THE NUMBERS

M-1420 20-strand wires	$15.95
M-1430 30-strand wires	$17.95
M-1440 40-strand wires	$19.95

(818) 392-7680, www.metrixwires.com

Quick Looks

WingKey

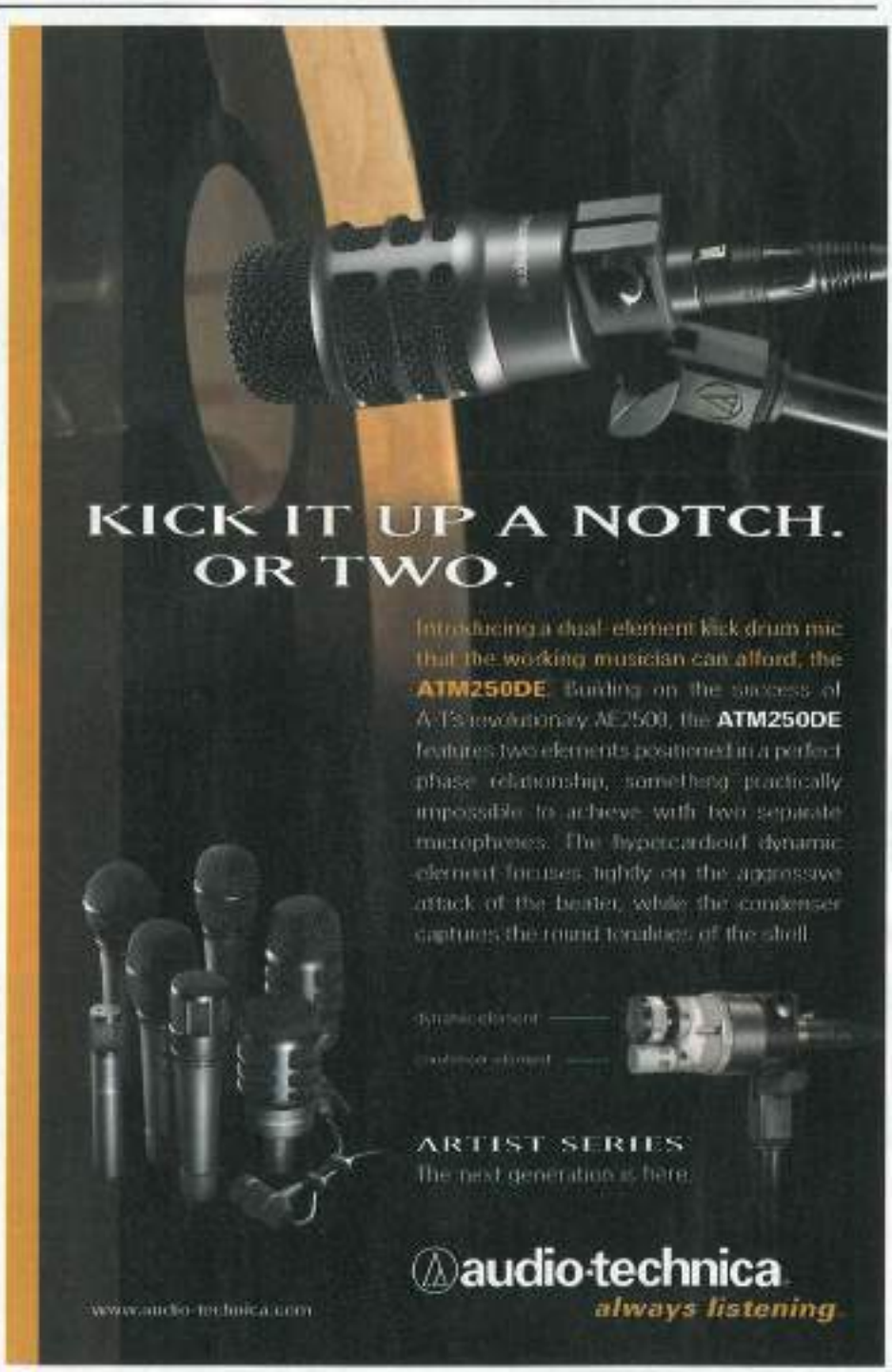
Believe me when I say, You need a WingKey. This machined-steel tool combines a standard drumkey, a ½" hex wrench (for conga lugs, multi-clamp nuts, and drum-throne backrest brackets), and two sizes of wingnut grippers. Those grippers are invaluable for *really* securing the wingnuts on percussion mounts, hi-hat clutches, drum hardware, and the various devices that seem to hold everything to everything else on kits these days. No more cowbells slipping off their rods, or cymbal stand sections collapsing during playing. (And no more broken thumbnails or scraped knuckles during set-ups, either.)

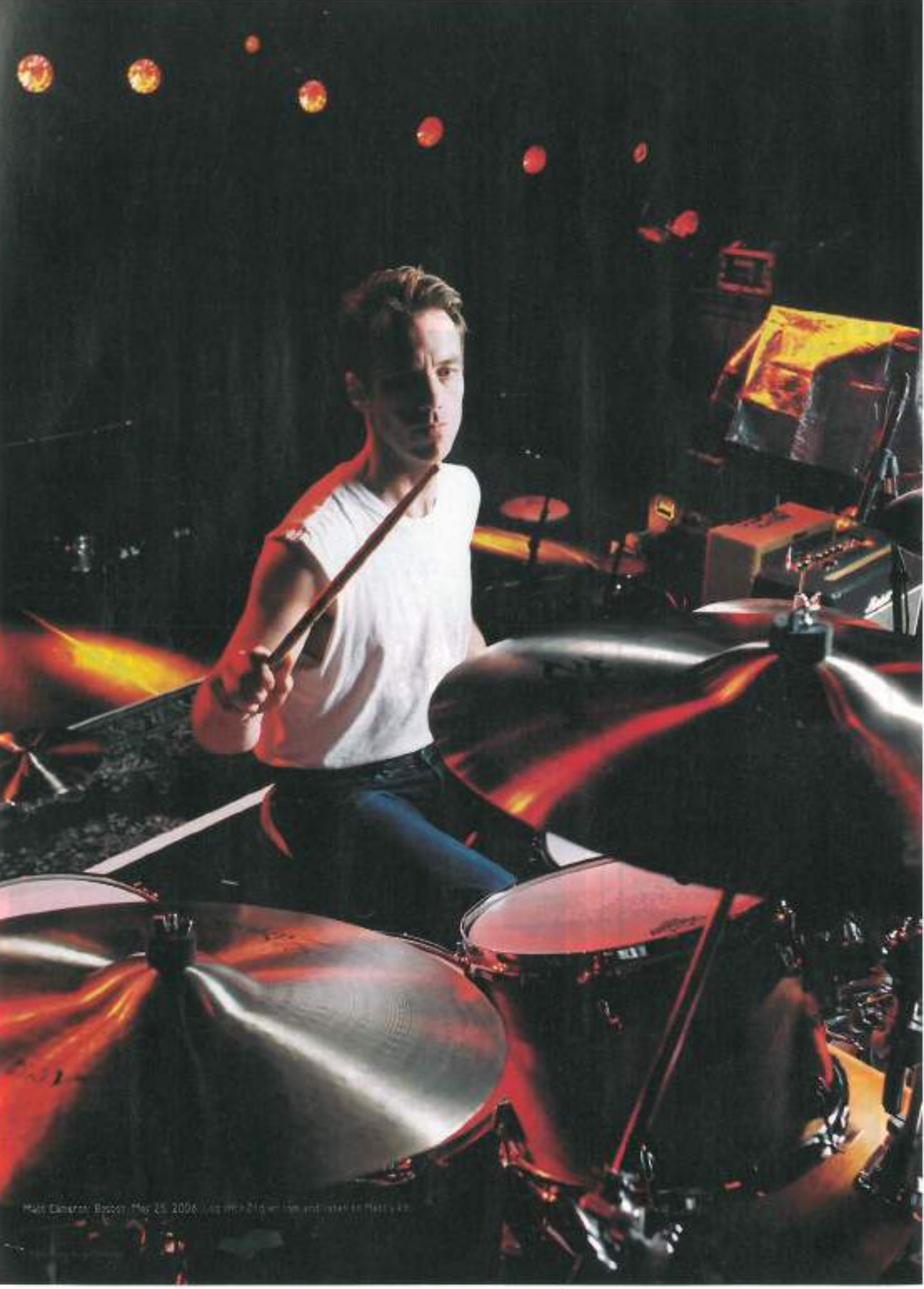
The percussionist in my band has quite a collection of congas, bongos, blocks, bells, and other devices to set up and secure. So I let him check out the WingKey that was sent to *MD*. After two gigs he flatly told me that I wasn't getting it back. So I purchased another WingKey in order to complete this review, and I'm keeping that one for myself.

The WingKey sells for $29, and its usefulness and construction quality would make it a bargain at twice the price. It's available in select stores and online from the manufacturer. Get one.

(408) 225-7814, www.wingkey.net

Rick Van Horn





CORNERSTONES.

Zildjian

SINCE · 1623

Avedis Zildjian III shaped the sound of modern music with his original Avedis or "A" Zildjian cymbals – tried and true musical icons whose undeniable impact is felt in almost every style of music. Like Avedis, Matt Cameron was on the leading edge of an emerging musical movement with Temple of the Dog and Soundgarden, and he continues to break new ground with Pearl Jam. The spirit of Avedis and the sound of A Zildjian live on everyday through Artists such as Matt. Vital, powerful, complete, the perfect foundation for your music.

<< GRETSCH CATALINA MAPLE

If you're looking for professional looks and sound at an affordable price, check out Gretsch's **Catalina Maple** kits. They feature thin shells in Cherry Red and Deep Amber finishes, triple-flange hoops, GTS suspension, mini-Gretsch lugs, and pro tom holders. List price is $1,075.
(860) 509-8888, www.gretschdrums.com

All five-piece Euro shell packs purchased in 2006 will include a free matching 16x16 floor tom.

<< DDRUM DIABLO COMBAT PUNX

Here's one instance when camouflage will make you stand out instead of disappearing. Ddrum's **Diablo Combat Punx** outfit features a camouflage canvas wrap over the drums' 9-ply basswood shells. A 20x22 kick drum with maple hoops, a 15-ply, 7x14 snare drum, one rack tom, and two floor toms are all standard, at a list price of $923.99.
(813) 600-3920, www.ddrum.com

<< BONUS BABIES FROM MAPEX

Size may not be everything, but sometimes it's the cool thing. For those who agree, Mapex's **"Go Large" Pack** converts standard M Birch kit configurations into eight- or nine-piece kits. Each pack includes an 18x22 bass drum, a 16x18 floor tom with legs, a TH650 tom holder, a B550A boom stand, and a P550A bass drum pedal, at a list price of $858.92 (for two new fade finishes) or $781.62 (for five transparent lacquer finishes).

The **Black Panther Dynamic Collector's Edition** stainless steel etched snare is reverse-etched with a tribal tattoo pattern, and is finished with a rounded bearing edge for a rich, warm tone. The batter head is silk-screened to match. Each drum comes in a padded hard-shell case. Only 100 will be sold in the US, exclusively through Five-Star drum shops. List price is $599.99.

(615) 793-2050, www.mapexdrums.com

Caixas produce bright, cutting sounds and penetrating rimshots. Their light weight makes them excellent for street samba.

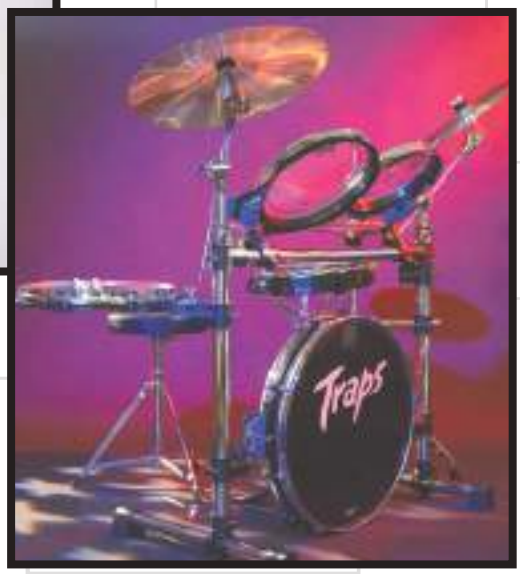
<< MEINL ALUMINUM CAIXAS

Got a little of the spirit of Carnavale in your blood? You might want to display it on Meinl Percussion's new 4 1/2x12 ($109) and 4x14 ($119) **Aluminum Caixas**, from their Samba line of Brazilian instruments. Each comes with steel snare wires and a professional throw-off mechanism.

(615) 227-5090 www.meinlpercussion.com

<< TRAPS DRUMS

From the "less is more" department: Traps drums are shell-less kits designed to be lightweight and portable without sacrificing professional sound quality. The Traps **E400** comes fitted with mesh heads and Traps Triggers for near-silent performance. The accompanying drum brain is a plug-and-play module with many features. The kit comes with a set of headphones and three molded electronic cymbals fitted with internal triggers. List price is $829.95.



The **A400** comes with a 20" double-headed bass drum, 10", 12", and 14" single-headed toms, and a 12" snare. Remo Asian Ambassador heads, a hardware package, and a cymbal set (13" hi-hats, a 14" crash, and an 18" crash/ride) complete the kit. List price is $529.95.
www.trapsdrums.com

<< ODERY OFFERINGS

Acoustic performance *can* be combined with aesthetic appeal, according to Odery. They're offering drums with **solid-block shells** made in partnership with Indrumdesign, using exotic Brazilian woods such as maracatiara, sucupira, jatoba, tamarin, and sapucarana. Blocks are pressure-glued into cylinders, which are then hand-lathed to create a unique look and sound.

Odery's **Hi-Tech drum hardware** system features lugs that open automatically for quick drumhead changes, while the tension rods remain attached to the hoop. Brass-and-aluminum snare strainers isolate tension control from the snare-release function. New Floating System suspension mounts feature aluminum pistons and internal shock absorbers to maximize natural drum vibration, resonance, and projection.

Also new are **aluminum-shell drums** made from 6 mm-thick naval aluminum sheets, which are molded, turned, and hammered by hand. They're designed to create exceptional attack and volume.
www.odery.com.br

<< MEINL 14" BYZANCE CHINA

A big bang may be impressive, but sometimes you want to make a more subtle statement. Meinl's **14" Byzance China** is designed to produce a short, explosive sound for quick China accents, while its hand-hammered B20 bronze alloy maintains a warm sound character. List price is $252.
(615) 227-5090, meinlcymbals.com

<< GIBRALTAR GOODIES

The Gibraltar/Sabian **Effects Mounting package** includes a Sabian XS20 10" Splash and an 18" China, mounted on a Gibraltar BCSA Boom Stacker and a CLRA L-Rod Cymbal Arm. Gibraltar is also throwing in a coupon for a free Tech bag (a $30 value!). List price is $349.

Gibraltar's **Ultra Adjust Cymbal Boom Arm** utilizes two gearless adjustments to offer infinite placement capabilities. The arm can be used as a boom or for achieving cymbal placement over or around any obstacle. List price is $79.99.

Vintage drum hardware often doesn't age as gracefully as vintage drums do. But installing totally modern hardware can ruin a kit's collectible value. Gibraltar to the rescue. Their **Vintage Rail Mount** fits most vintage two-hole mounting patterns, so it can be installed without drilling the drumshell. It features a 10.5-mm L-rod with memory lock and rail position adjustments, at a list price of $109.99.
(860) 509-8888, www.gibraltarhardware.com

The Reference Shelf

Vintage Snare Drums—The Curotto Collection

Vol. 1: Rare American-Made 1900s to 1940s (Book)

One of the world's most valuable collections of vintage snare drums is presented in this full-color gift book. It features eighty-five of the rarest drums from super-collector Mike Curotto's collection of more than four hundred, including snares from Gretsch, Ludwig, Slingerland, Gladstone, and Wurlitzer. Each drum is digitally photographed to depict its beauty and detail, and is accompanied by a complete historical description. List price is $29.95.
www.musicdispatch.com

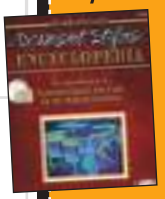
The Drum Set Smart Book (Book/CD)

by Steve Fidyk

Style, Mechanics, Applications, Routines, and Tips make up this book on drumming fundamentals from teacher/performer Steve Fidyk. The accompanying CD contains sound examples (cymbals, sticks, drumheads, brushes), snare drum and drumset exercises, and demonstrations of musical styles played with a rhythm section. List price is 17.95.
(800) 863-5229, www.melbay.com

The Drumset Styles Encyclopedia (Book/CD)

by John Thomakos



Subtitled "An introduction to essential styles/time-feels for the modern drummer," this work is a comprehensive overview of contemporary pop, rock, and ethnic styles by Baltimore-area drummer/author John Thomakos. The CD includes ninety-eight tracks giving audio illustrations of each example. List price is $22.95.
(800) 863-5229, www.melbay.com

This Business Of Songwriting (Book)

by Jason Blume

This book is dubbed "a practical guide to doing business as a songwriter." For drummers interested in getting more involved with the songwriting efforts of their bands, the book details the business-related topics, including finding a publisher, and an explanation of how songs generate revenue. List price is $24.95.
www.wgpub.com

Fitness For Drummers (DVD)

by Justin Spencer

Justin Spencer is a member of the touring percussion performance group Recycled Percussion. His DVD offers stretching and workout routines, gives tips to increase stamina, and examines drumming injuries and how to recover from them. List price is $24.95.
www.musicdispatch.com

<< LUDWIG ON THE MARCH

Playing a marching drum can be a grueling, sweaty endeavor, even if you love doing it. Ludwig's new **Free Floater Snare Drum** can make things a little easier. It has an integrated finish on its cross-laminated birch/maple shell for superior pitch and tone with light weight, while heat-treated 6-mm steel key rods provide high-tension tuning.

All-birch **Challenger Tenor and Bass Drum Shells** also feature the new integrated finish. New aluminum alloy rail systems for quad, quint, and sextuplet designs make them over two pounds lighter than previous models. Die-cast lug casings with support plates on the inside of the tenor shell provide extra strength.
(574) 522-1675, www.ludwig-drums.com

The Reference Shelf
continued

Shed Sessionz Vol 1 (DVD)

This DVD is a display of skill and musicianship by a group of young Gospel drummers in an unrehearsed, spontaneous jam session. Featured are Tony Royster Jr., Thomas Pridgen, Jeremy Haynes, Joey Oscar, and Erik Moore II.
www.gospelchops.com

Cuban Rumba (DVD)
by Javier Campos Martinez

Cuban master teacher Martinez gives a masterclass explaining the essence of rumba as performed on various percussion instruments.
www.reinmusic.nl

Essential Rhythms For Personal Empowerment (CD)
by Pamela Lynn

A play-along CD with twenty West African and Middle Eastern rhythms, mixed with hand percussionist Lynn's own contemporary style.
www.freestyledrumming.com

Beginning The Beat (2-DVD set)
by Peter Knudson

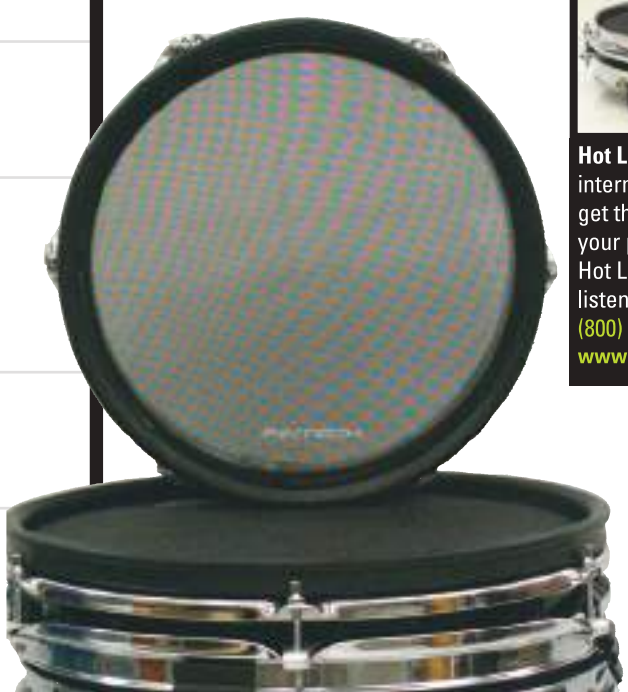
Veteran performer/teacher Knudson discusses the mechanical aspects of drumming (tuning, set-up, equipment) on one disc, then moves to performance instruction on the second. Everything is targeted at beginning drummers of any age.
www.coloradodrum.com

Bass Drum Techniques For Today's Drummer: Unburying The Beater (DVD)
by Matt Ritter

This DVD explores the "unburying" pedal technique that Matt Ritter wrote about in the December '04 issue of *Modern Drummer*. The goal is speed, fluidity, and a clean sound.
www.mattrittermusic.com

<< PINTECH LID

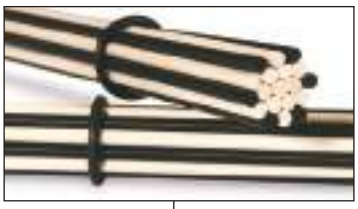
"Keep the *lid* on." Okay, we get it. Pintech's **Lid** practice pads are designed to be portable and quiet, while simulating actual drumset conditions. The 3"-deep pads attach to the tops of the drums. Their mesh heads resemble the feel of a regular drumhead while producing a low-volume sound.



Hot Lid versions include an internal trigger assembly. To get the audible feedback from your practice, just connect the Hot Lid to a drum module and listen through a headset.
(800) 445-0506,
www.pintechworld.com

<< AND WHAT'S MORE >>

SILVERFOX Clawstix feature thirteen traditional wood dowels interlaced with six black Delrin polymer dowels. The Delrin rods



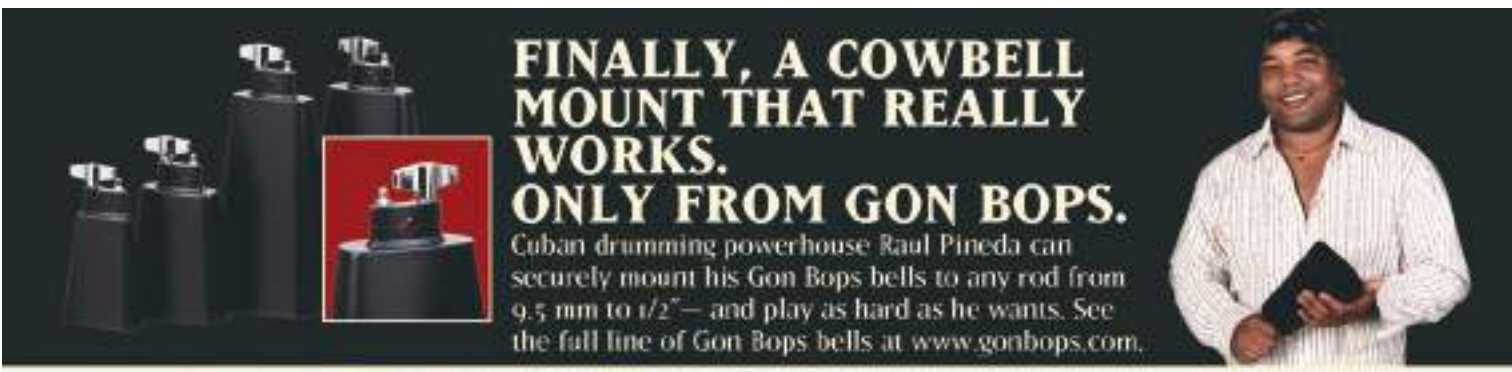
enhance cymbal tone through cleaner definition on cymbals, while the hickory dowels provide the warmth, balance, and feel of traditional rod-style sticks. An adjustable "O" ring allows adjustment of rod spread. A positive grip handle provides comfort and prevents slippage. List price is $30.
(781) 935-6200, www/beststick.com

The **SWIRLYSHTICK** drumstick holder features a spiral design made from recycled steel. It can hold up to six sticks, and it attaches easily to most drum hardware with 1" tubing. The holder is available online at Musician's Friend and Same Day Music, or through dealers listed on the manufacturer's Web site.
www.swirlygig.com

XL SPECIALTY PERCUSSION's Omni Rail Lite II marching timp-tom platform is stable, solid, and lighter than previous Omni Rails. It offers easy height adjustment for drum-to-drum leveling, and is available for quad, quint, and sept drum configurations.
(800) 348-1012, www.xlspec.com

The **ROBOKEY 4X** is a palm-sized drumkey with an inline gear system that quadruples wrist turning speed, allowing drummers to replace drumheads faster. The solid, polypro handle is molded in bright colors for visibility in dark stage areas or a gear bag. The key tip fits directly on tension rods, without adaptors that could be lost. List price is $29.95.
www.robokey.com

FINGERSTIX are 6"-long drumsticks that attach to two or more fingers on each hand, by means of elastic bands. Drummers and percussionists can use their hands to create new patterns on drumkits, cymbals, hand percussion instruments, and electronic pads.
(800) 862-5482, www.fingerstix.com



From Birth

Koyama Yoshitaka Yamaha Craftsman Profile

Job Title: Shell Buffing Manager Years Experience: 23 years

"The first 3 years of my career I spent as a student, studying with each senior paint manager. This was done so I could be an expert in every step of the painting process. Only after mastering that knowledge could I become the craftsman I am today. For the past 20 years I have been involved with buffing each Yamaha drum that comes out of Sakae Rhythm. It's an art form I am proud to have mastered."

Absolute Birch Nouveau

Artistry

When John "JR" Robinson performs any one of his signature grooves, it's artistry in the making. As one of the most recorded drummer's of all time, JR has chosen Yamaha Drums as his sound pallet since 1981.

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To Performance
Yamaha Drum Artist Profile: John "JR" Robinson
Who JR Has Worked With: Steve Winwood, Quincy Jones, Michael Jackson, Eric Clapton, Herbie Hancock... just to name a few.
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The 14" x 6.5" Birch Shell, with a stunning Amber Sunburst Birdseye Maple outer ply, is not the only unique quality of this drum. It also features a 60 degree top bearing edge that is embedded with 20 - 2" copper nails and a bottom bearing edge cut at 35 degrees. This combined with a 2.7mm snare bed makes this instrument's versatility limitless.
(The color Amber Sunburst and outer Birdseye Maple ply is only available in the JR Signature Snare drum)
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Lamb Of God's Chris Adler

More Than Meets The Eye

Story by Michael Dawson
photos by Daragh McDonagh

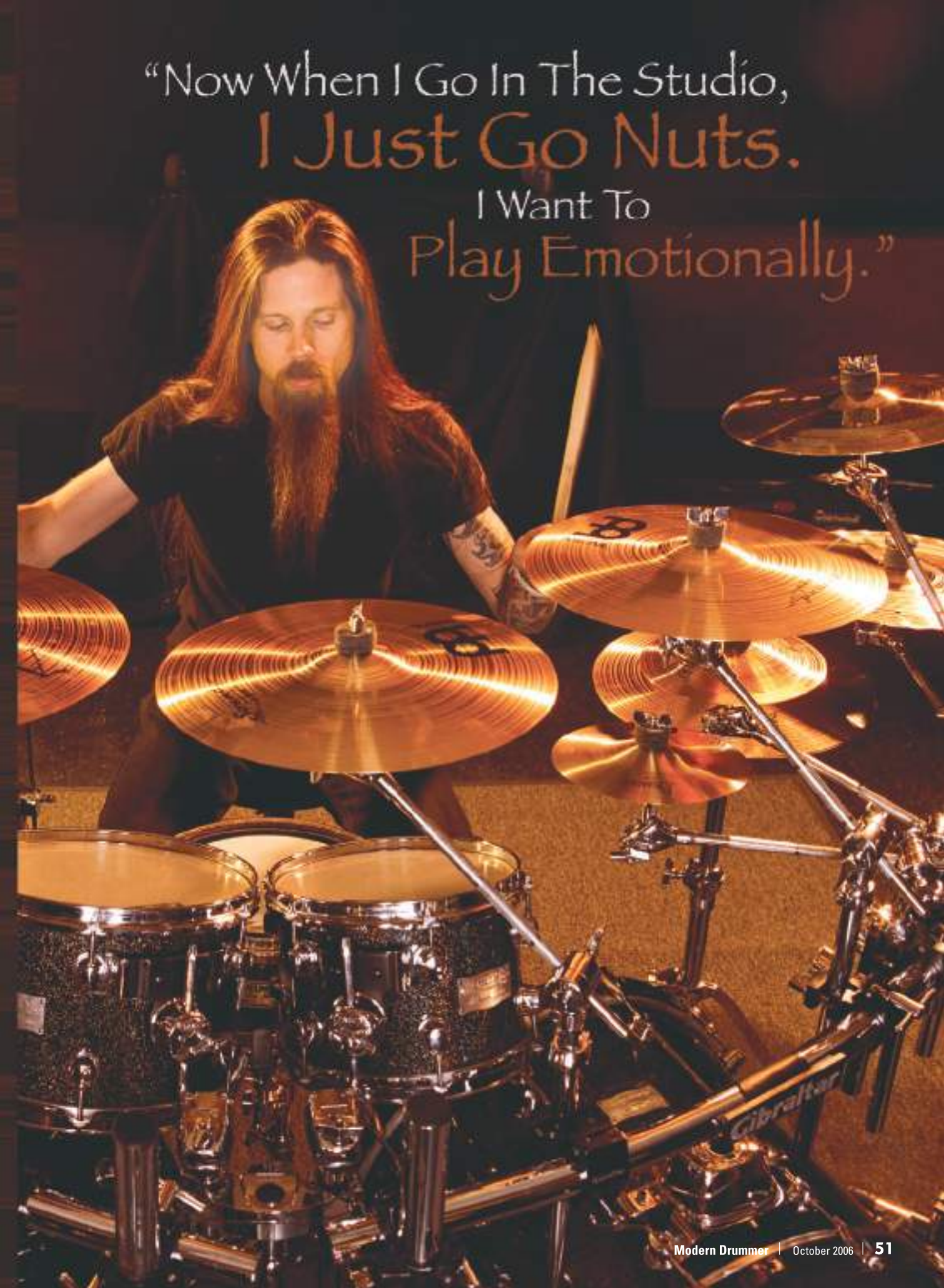
Last year, Modern Drummer Festival attendees witnessed what legions of devoted heavy metal fans have known for years: There's something special about Lamb Of God's drummer, Chris Adler. Not only has he pushed metal drumming's trifecta of speed, power, and precision to new heights, he also brings a level of creativity and intelligence to the music that places him at the head of the pack. No, he's not the fastest drummer on two feet. And he's not going to "wow" you with amazing fifteen-minute drum solos. But when you dig in and take a closer look at what Adler and Lamb Of God are doing, you'll find some of the most interesting, powerful, and perfectly executed music in metal.

Before they became the new millennium's figurehead for American metal, Adler and company were like many other young bands in the tight-knit Richmond, Virginia music scene. Says Chris, "We were just drinking buddies, traveling around in a van, seeing how much trouble we could get into." But after a few years of beating the scene, things started to take off. Under the moniker Burn The Priest, the band released a self-titled full-length in 1998. "We put the album out on a very small label in Philadelphia," Chris recalls. "And the initial pressing of 2,500 went very quickly. We then posted the songs on mp3.com, where they got a huge amount of attention. That's what eventually convinced Prosthetic Records to sign us for *New American Gospel*."

While *Burn The Priest* boasted some of the most pummeling drumming in the group's catalog [see the *Off The Record* sidebar], it was their 2000 release *New American Gospel*—as Lamb Of God—that had post-Pantera metal freaks foaming at the mouth. This was the record that introduced the metal drumming community to Chris's signature pistol-pop snare, jaw-dropping double bass, and unexpected riffs.

Since then, Lamb Of God has made their mark on the road, touring for the better part of the past six years with other major metal artists like Slipknot and Black Sabbath, or on their own headlining shows. They also traveled around the country as a part of Ozzfest 2004 and MTV's Headbanger's Ball tour. Along the way, two more albums, 2003's *As The Palaces Burn* and 2004's major-label debut *Ashes Of The Wake*, and two documentary DVDs, *Terror And Hubris* and *Killadelphia*, were released, further elevating the band's first tier status. (For a great primer on Chris' inventive drumming, check out his entire performance at the Modern Drummer Festival Weekend, now available on DVD.)

This past year, Lamb Of God returned home to Richmond to prepare their sophomore release for Epic Records, *Sacrament*. We caught up with Chris as the band was finishing up the record and in the midst of daylong rehearsals for an upcoming tour with thrash metal legends Slayer.


"Now When I Go In The Studio,
I Just Go Nuts.
I Want To
Play Emotionally."
Gibraltar

Sacrament In The Making

MD: What's the musical direction on *Sacrament*?

Chris: It's still very Lamb Of God. The difference this time is that we have more experience in the whole circle of writing, recording, touring, and everything else, so we were able to do more of what we've always wanted to do.

MD: Has the writing process stayed the same?

Chris: We felt really rushed to write our last album, *Ashes Of The Wake*. This time we didn't want to feel that crunch. Since the end of last July, we were writing five or six days a week for six to eight hours a day.

MD: Was any of the new material written on the road?

Chris: No. We have a hard time writing on the road. From the time we wake up until the time we go on stage, we're generally doing interviews or signings. And by the time we're done and packed up, it's midnight and we're on to the next city. So there's not a lot of time for us to write.

We do have a couple of Macs on the bus with GarageBand, so if somebody comes up with an idea in the middle of the night, they can record it. But we excel at writing at home, where we can be focused, set up a schedule, and stay true to it.

MD: What's the writing process like? Do the guitar riffs come first?

Chris: It varies. But eighty to ninety percent of the time, the guitar riff comes first. One of the guys will be like, "Hey, I've got this part that leads into this, but I'm lost after that." That's where I jump in. I'm kind of the "arrangement guy." But occasionally I'll come up with a cool beat that we can design a riff around. Those usually become a breakdown section where we lock into a heavy, rhythmic part.

MD: Lamb Of God doesn't use standard verse/chorus arrangements. What's your process for arranging songs?

Chris: There isn't a process other than not wanting to be conventional, while at the same time marrying things that make sense to us. We purposely set out to make things interesting for the listener *and* for ourselves. If we're going to take this material on the road and play it for the next year and a half, we don't want to be sleepwalking through the set. We

Chris's Kit

Drums: Mapex Saturn Pro Series in cherry walnut finish

- **A.** 5½x12 bird's-eye maple Black Panther snare
- **B.** 9x10 tom
- **C.** 10x12 tom
- **D.** 16x16 floor tom
- **E.** 16x18 floor tom
- **F.** 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Meinl

1. 14" Filter China
2. 12" Chris Adler Soundcaster Custom Distortion Splash
3. 14" Soundcaster Medium Soundwave hi-hat (top), Byzance Dark (bottom)
4. 8" Candela High Bell
5. 14" Soundcaster medium crash
6. 8" Byzance splash
7. 14" Soundcaster medium crash
8. 16" Amun thin crash
9. 8" Byzance splash
10. 18" Byzance medium thin crash (brilliant finish)
11. 14" Soundcaster medium Soundwave hi-hat (top), 14" Byzance Dark (bottom)
12. 24" Chris Adler Signature Mb20 Pure Metal Ride
13. 17" Chris Adler custom China
14. 16" Filter China

Hardware: Axis Percussion Longboard pedals with Sonic Hammer beaters (not pictured), Gibraltar rack and hardware

Sticks: Pro-Mark Chris Adler signature stick

Heads: Aquarian Response 2 on toms, High Energy on snare, Force I on kicks (with black ported front heads)

MY IDEAL DRUM SOUND...

would be very quick, very dark, and very sharp. Most of what I play is locked into what the guitars are doing, so I don't need a big Led Zeppelin sound. I want my drums to be snappy.

THE SNARE IS THE TRICKY GUY, especially when there's so much stuff going on around it. Where a lot of guys are going for an '80s Twisted Sister–type snare sound, I want the snare to stick out more.

An example of a great snare sound is on Queensrÿche's *Operation: Mindcrime*. I don't want to model my sound exactly after that. But I want to achieve something similar, only higher-pitched.

FOR MY KICKS, the beater head is pretty tight so that I can get a nice bounce off of it. The front head is only finger-tightened enough so that it doesn't wrinkle and fall off when I'm playing. Live, I put a pillow inside the drum. But when we're recording, the pillow comes out.

WITH THE TOMS, as long as the heads are taut enough to get a nice bounce, it'll work for me. I don't want them to be so tight that they sound like *Miami Vice*, but I also don't want them to be so loose that they're flapping around in the wind.

want to challenge ourselves, and we want to challenge the listener to understand what we're going for.

MD: Is there room for you to improvise within your parts?

Chris: There's not a lot of room for improv in what we're doing. When I went to see heavy metal bands growing up, I wanted to hear them pull off what was on the record because I couldn't believe that they did it to begin with. Maybe other people think differently, but I don't want to go out there and change the part that's on the record.

But there are times when I do add things, like when we play songs from our older records. I may add a double bass part if there wasn't one on the record, but I'm not going to change the basic rhythms. Once it's on the album, we've already tried it a bunch of different ways, and that's the part that fits best.

MD: What about early on in the writing process? Are you constantly experimenting?

Chris Adler | Lamb of God

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Chris Adler

Chris: Absolutely. Each of the songs on *Sacrament* was demoed several times before we got to the point where we said, "Okay, we're ready to record." Once you record yourself, you can get out from behind your instrument and analyze your parts as a listener. Then you'll get a greater perspective of what's going to best fit the song. It's good to sit down as a band and talk about your music. Listen to the demos in your car and ask yourself, "Okay, I know I enjoy playing the drum part that way, but wouldn't it be better for the song if I laid back a little bit?" You have to pick the right moments to jump out as a drummer, while also understanding when it's totally unnecessary. These things come with time and experience. And that's what we're getting into now.

MD: Take me through your process of writing a beat over a guitar riff.

Drummer Inkblot Test

Throughout their career, Lamb Of God has toured with some of the biggest and most cutting-edge bands in heavy metal. Along the way, Chris has come in contact with many great drummers of metal's past and present. Here are his thoughts on some of the genre's biggest names.

Shannon Larkin (Godsmack)

Inspiration. I saw Shannon play in Washington, DC with a band called Wrathchild America, and I knew right then that I wanted to play drums. He plays like I try to play, where everything's a riff. Everything you do is as important as the guitar riff or the vocal line.

Lars Ulrich (Metallica)

Lars' playing on *...And Justice For All* had a snappy, quick, and clicky sound that has become the metal drum sound of today. That album made me start taping quarters on my bass drum heads, and it made me start paying attention to how my cymbals sounded.

Dave Lombardo (Slayer)

Pure Animal, speed, and aggression. And when I say Animal, I mean the guy from *The Muppets*. That dude is pushing things for the sake of pushing. It's not that he goes overboard, but he's taking the instrument to the limit. I've borrowed a lot of my fast ride patterns from Dave.

Vinnie Paul (Pantera)

When metal was starting to become really straightforward, and blast beats were starting to catch on, Vinnie pulled the groove back into the music. Vinnie also took the metal drum sound to the next level. After hearing *Cowboys From Hell* and *Vulgar Display Of Power*, the entire metal drum community agreed that *that's* what drums were supposed to sound like.

Gene Hoglan (Strapping Young Lad)

Unbridled talent. That guy is the king. In the things that he's done, the drums are as important as everything else. I've never tried to consciously copy a Gene Hoglan part. But being such a huge fan, I know that his influence has crept into me, especially when trying to find unique ways of voicing the instrument.

Brann Dailor (Mastodon)

Brann has the quickest hands that I've ever seen. When we recorded *Burn The Priest*, I had an album with me called *It's Hard To Write With A Small Hand* by this band Lethargy. Brann was their drummer. On that record, he played some blazing tom runs that he's now famous for. He was actually sleeping in Steve Austin's studio while we were recording. Had I known it was him, I would've been too embarrassed to play. He was one of those big guys in my head at the time.

Joey Jordison (Slipknot)

Joey's universal. He's a well-rounded guy who appreciates a lot of different styles of heavy metal and can jump into almost any gig at a moment's notice. To me, that would be incredibly intimidating. I would freak out and not know what to do. But he's the kind of guy who can take on those situations and do them right.

Jason Bittner (Shadows Fall)

Consistent. We've toured with Shadows Fall more than anybody, and I don't think I've ever seen him play a song differently. The guy is a machine.

Tomas Haake (Meshuggah)

Innovator. A lot of people consider him to be this technical guy who's sitting in his bedroom doing math problems all night, but he isn't any of that. Like me, he's playing along to what his bandmates are coming up with. But because of what he's reacting to, he's doing stuff that's so innovative and outside of the box. It's like watching a good jazz drummer play, where you get a feeling like, Man, there is no way I could do that.

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Chris Adler

Chris: Normally when a riff comes in, I won't jump on it right away with a straightforward beat. Instead, I'll think about ways to enhance the part that's not going to be the same thing that anybody else would play. I'm hearing the riff a hundred times while the guys are teaching it to each other, so I just sit behind the kit thinking about where the snare and kicks should fall. Then by the time the three of them look back at me and say, "What've you got?" it's not going to be the first thing that would've popped out.

But my parts continue to evolve until we're in the studio for the last time. By that point, they've been through the ringer so many times that I'm either in love with what I'm doing or I've gone back to the part that made the most sense.

MD: Did you track the drums with the entire band?

Chris: No. I recorded by myself with a click track at Spin Studios in Queens, New York. I was there for six days. Then the tracks went back to Richmond, Virginia, where we recorded guitars and vocals.

MD: How many takes were you doing for each song?

Chris: Normally we did about three takes. That gave us a good range of performances to work with. It's not so much about the mistakes that I made the first time, because everything can be cut together and lined up. It's more like, "How did that tom fill sound?" or, "How did the snare sound on that little run?" That's the kind of stuff we were looking for.

MD: Do you play any differently in the studio versus live?

Chris: There's probably not as many stick twirls in the studio. [laughs] When you track the drums separately from the guitars and vocals, you tend to lose a lot of power and emotion in the song. And when everything's lined up to a click track, you can lose the vibe. So I try to come into our sessions a little more hyped up than I would for a live show, because I know that everything that I put into it is going to come out through the mics. It's not just about how I tune my snare and toms. It's about how I played, including those little variations and small wavers off of the click track that I purposely don't fix.

When I was coming up, as soon as I knew there was a studio date, I would focus on nailing everything perfectly. It became an obsession. I practiced my parts a million times to make sure that I'd get a perfect take. Now when I go in, it's totally flipped around. I just go nuts. Of course I have parts that I want to play and I want to get great takes, but I'm not focused on playing it perfectly. I want to play emotionally. Then we can use the best parts from all of the takes to make the songs come alive.

MD: Are you involved in the editing process?

Chris: Yes, absolutely. I learned from my mistakes with *As The Palaces Burn*. When we arrived in Vancouver to mix that record, the drums had been totally gridded-out and sampled. I wanted to throw up when I heard it because the original takes were so good. I didn't understand how editing them so much could possibly have made things better. Unfortunately, I only had a few days to try to undo that.

Since then—on *Ashes Of The Wake* and *Sacrament*—not only have I had a hand in post-production, I've also been the main editor. I'm interested in finding the vibe of the songs and not messing with them too much. Then you can take those tracks to the guitar players and let them vibe with what you're doing, instead of having everything be so sterile and locked to the click.

MD: How do you know what to edit and what to leave alone?

Chris: It may seem difficult, but the bottom line is: Do what sounds good. And when given the option to leave or edit a part, I favor leaving it. For most of the verses and choruses, it's a pretty straightforward choice; it's going to be set to the click. But during a fill or variation to what's going on, I try to leave it alone.

It's sometimes hard to tell if that push/pull is going to work when all that you have are drum tracks. But if you've rehearsed enough, you know that the song was meant to feel that way. The guitar players will play their parts exactly the same way as you did because it was rehearsed that way so many times.

MD: What are some of your favorite tracks on the new album?

Chris: There's a song called "Redneck" that's a great example of me playing for the song. Certain songs come together so easily that it's almost like you're being told what to play. "Redneck" is one of those.

The first song that we wrote for the record is called "Walk With Me In Hell." There's a lot of hand stuff in that one, and there are a lot of variations in the feet where I'm switching from 16ths to triplets within the same bar.

Overall, I wanted to really push my hand speed. Most of the stuff on the previous record was rhythm-based. This time it was important for me to push myself into new territory. And even though it was uncomfortable

Continued on page 62

CHRIS ADLER
"LAMB OF GOD"
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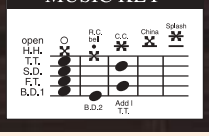
24" Pure Metal Ride
Chris Adler - "Lamb of God" - Ozzfest 2004.
Learn more about Chris and his set-up, and the 24-inch Pure Metal Ride he helped design (...it will make your ears bleed), go to www.meinlcymbals.com
MEINL

ADLER
Off The Record

Lamb Of God's first full-length (when they were known as Burn The Priest) was recently made commercially available for the first time, and their debut as Lamb Of God, *New American Gospel*, was also re-released with an aural facelift. These two punishing and inventive discs laid the groundwork for the band as they prepared to leap to the forefront of modern heavy metal with later discs *As The Palaces Burn* and *Ashes Of The Wake*. Here, Chris takes us through the volatile experience of recording each of the band's albums, outlining some of his favorite tracks along the way.

MUSIC KEY



Burn The Priest (1998)

This was our first album, and we recorded it to 2" tape, without a click track, at Steve Austin's studio in Boston. We recorded, mixed, and self-mastered fourteen songs in four days.

From the start of the process, we were under a lot of stress. We got into a wreck on the way to the studio, so we sat in a hotel for two days in New Jersey while our van was being repaired. We finally made it to Boston with only four days left to finish the record. We got there at about 11:00 P.M., but we knew there was too much to do to not track that first evening. By 9:00 A.M., we had drum tracks for ten of the fourteen songs. If I had taken any more time, we never would have finished the record.

Select Cuts

My favorite song on *Burn The Priest* is "Lies Of Autumn." It encompasses everything that we were doing as a band. It has the sludgy Southern metal thing and it has a tight speed-metal ending, which is something that I've always pushed for.

The song "Suffering Bastard" starts out with a drum fill that I was very proud of, because I'd figured out how to choke cymbals. (0:00)

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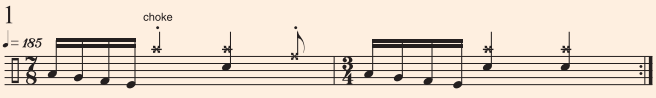
My riff for "Preaching To The Converted" feels like it's twisted in a direction that's a little bit off. I had to really think about how I was going to make this one work. (1:06)

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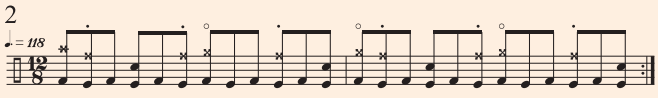
"Dimera" is the first example of a song that was built around one of my drumbeats. It wasn't my intention to have the guitars lock in with my kick drums. But once everyone learned the rhythm, we realized how cool it sounded, so we left it. (0:17)

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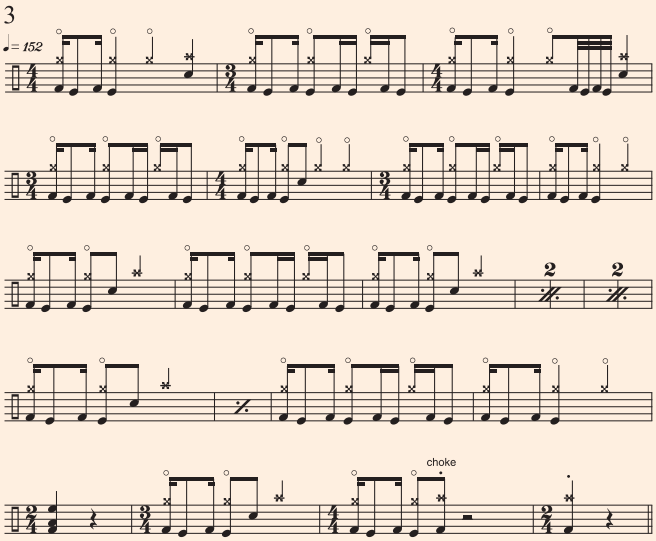
New American Gospel (2000)

My drumming on *New American Gospel* showed more of my creative side, versus my more intense, fast, hard-hitting side on *Burn The Priest*. Even though I was still in the mode of proving my abilities, this was the first time where there was even a hint of me playing for the song.

In the middle of this recording, I had a mental breakdown. I was the band's manager at the time, so I put a lot of pressure on myself to turn over a really professional product. There was a day during the six days of recording where things were moving too slow, and I just lost it. At one point, I started screaming in the tracking room, and the producer caught it on tape. We ended up using that as part of the intro to "The Black Dahlia." When I think of *New American Gospel*, I think of the mindframe I was in at the time.

Select Cuts

"Black Label" has become *the* song of the band. It was the song that put us on the map. We had nine songs ready to go for this record. Then on the last day of rehearsal, Willy brought in

this song's opening riff. We spent about ten hours that day trying to finish it. (0:42)

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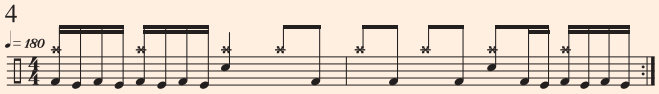
The song "Confessional" has a cool drum intro that builds into an insane blast beat part. I had never played a blast beat before, and probably never will again. (0:00)

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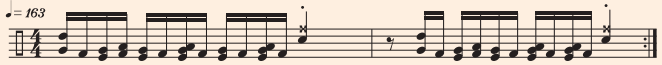
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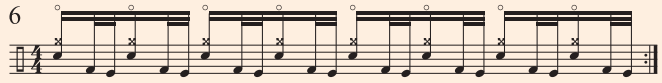
We had two great parts for "The Subtle Arts Of Murder And Persuasion," but they didn't match up because one was in 16ths and the other was in triplets. I came up with a drum roll to play over the 16ths that allowed me to switch right into the second part. (2:48)

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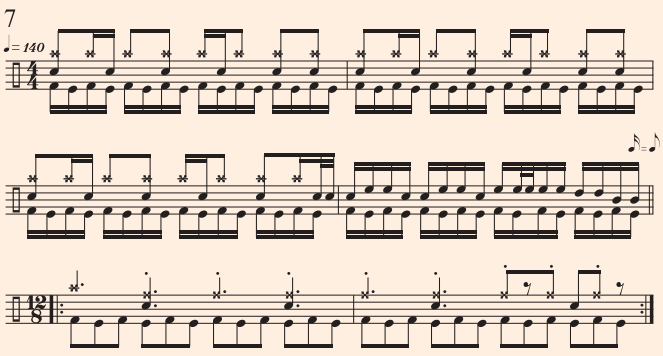
As The Palaces Burn (2003)

We pushed ourselves harder on this record than on any of the earlier ones. We were trying to perform stuff that was above *any* of our abilities at the time. It was very frustrating. But we knew that if we really woodshedded the songs, it was going to be a magic record for us.

We recorded this album at home in Richmond. This was the first time that we recorded digitally, and it was the first time that we used a click track. Because it was digital, this was also the first time that we used drum editing. After I did three or four takes of each song, we took the tracks to an editing station where we could mix and match the best parts of each one. But we didn't grid everything out at that point. There was still some human swing in the drums.

The problems started once the takes were sent to Vancouver to be mixed. Although we had edited the drums to a point where there was a cool vibe to them, when we arrived in Vancouver the drums had been completely gridded. So we spent a lot of time trying to get things back to where they were before they left Richmond.

I wish we had spent more time trying to un-edit the drum tracks. The album contains some of the most intense, fast, and tight playing that I've ever done. But I still have a tainted vision of it, and I probably will forever.

Select Cuts

My favorite track is "11th Hour." This was another last-minute song that came out of the pressure of needing one more track for the record. When Willie brought in that opening riff, I heard this drumbeat right away. I never questioned, "Can I do this?" or "Can we slow it down?" It was just fumbled attempt after fumbled attempt to try to nail it. Eventually it just showed up, and I was able to do it. (0:00)

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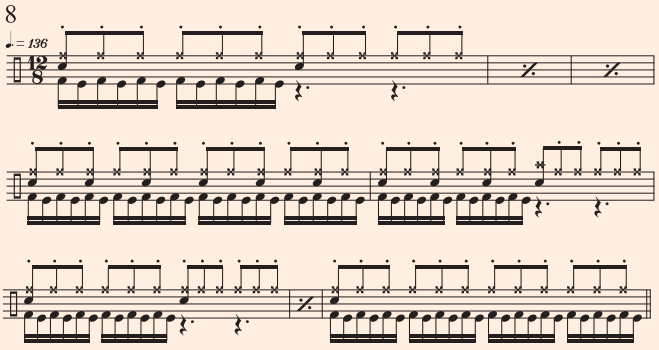
"Ruin" was the first song that we wrote after *New American Gospel*. Near the end, there's a falling-down-the-stairs drum break that everybody asks me about. It's an eight-count thing that I heard in my head. And because I'm left-handed, it came out weird and unconventional. (2:40)

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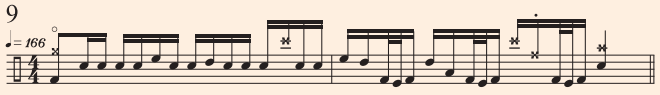

Ashes Of The Wake (2004)

After we signed with Epic, they wanted a new record as soon as possible. We started writing this record at the beginning of 2004, and by July it was finished and we were touring with Ozzfest.

Because Epic wanted the album right away, we felt very pressured. While the previous records took years to make, we only had *four months* to write our major label debut. We were looking at ourselves like, Man, we were just in the studio seven months ago with *Palaces*; How are we going to progress in such a short amount of time? It was really tough, but pressure can bring out good things in certain people. We knew that some of our best material had been written at the last moment, and we considered every part of this one to be at the last moment.

We recorded the drums at Water Music in Hoboken, New Jersey, and I was as ready as I had been before to lay down the tracks in one or two days. But our producer, Machine, insisted on only doing two songs a day. He wanted me to be relaxed and get great takes.

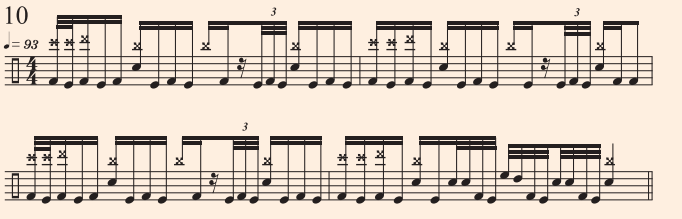
This was the first time that I recorded with my walnut Mapex

kit, and it was the best-sounding drumkit I had ever heard in my life. The room at Water Music was also perfect for what we were doing. We blocked off a corner of the room with office partitions, so the sound was very tight.

Select Cuts

On every record there's a song or two that Willie and I write by ourselves. One of those is "Hourglass." Machine didn't want this one on the record. He felt it was some sort of prog-rock experiment that had gone way off the deep end. But Willie and I fought tooth and nail to get this song on the record. Now it's turned out to not only be one of the band's favorites, but also a fan favorite.

The drums are a little more complicated on "Now You've Got Something To Die For." The riff was pretty straightforward, so I wanted to do something interesting with it. Beats like this one may not make sense in a traditional way. But because I haven't had any classic drum training, I haven't been told what's right or wrong. As long as I can pull it off and it sounds good, it's right. (0:00)



Continued from page 58

at first, I tried to consciously think of doing things with my hands that I'd never done before. There's a song called "Foot To The Throat" that really illustrates that idea.

Road Warrior

MD: You guys keep a rigorous touring schedule. You're currently on the road in support of Slayer, and you're planning to be out for the majority of next year.

Chris: Yeah, we're lucky to be able to do that. One of the greatest things about being in a band is going to different places like Japan or Australia that you'd never have the opportunity to visit on your own.

But touring so much can also take a toll on relationships and your sense of reality. People want to spend time with you every day, so you have to make sure that you take a look at yourself and still know who you are, because it can get pretty surreal at times.

MD: How do you keep yourself inspired to go out and play every night?

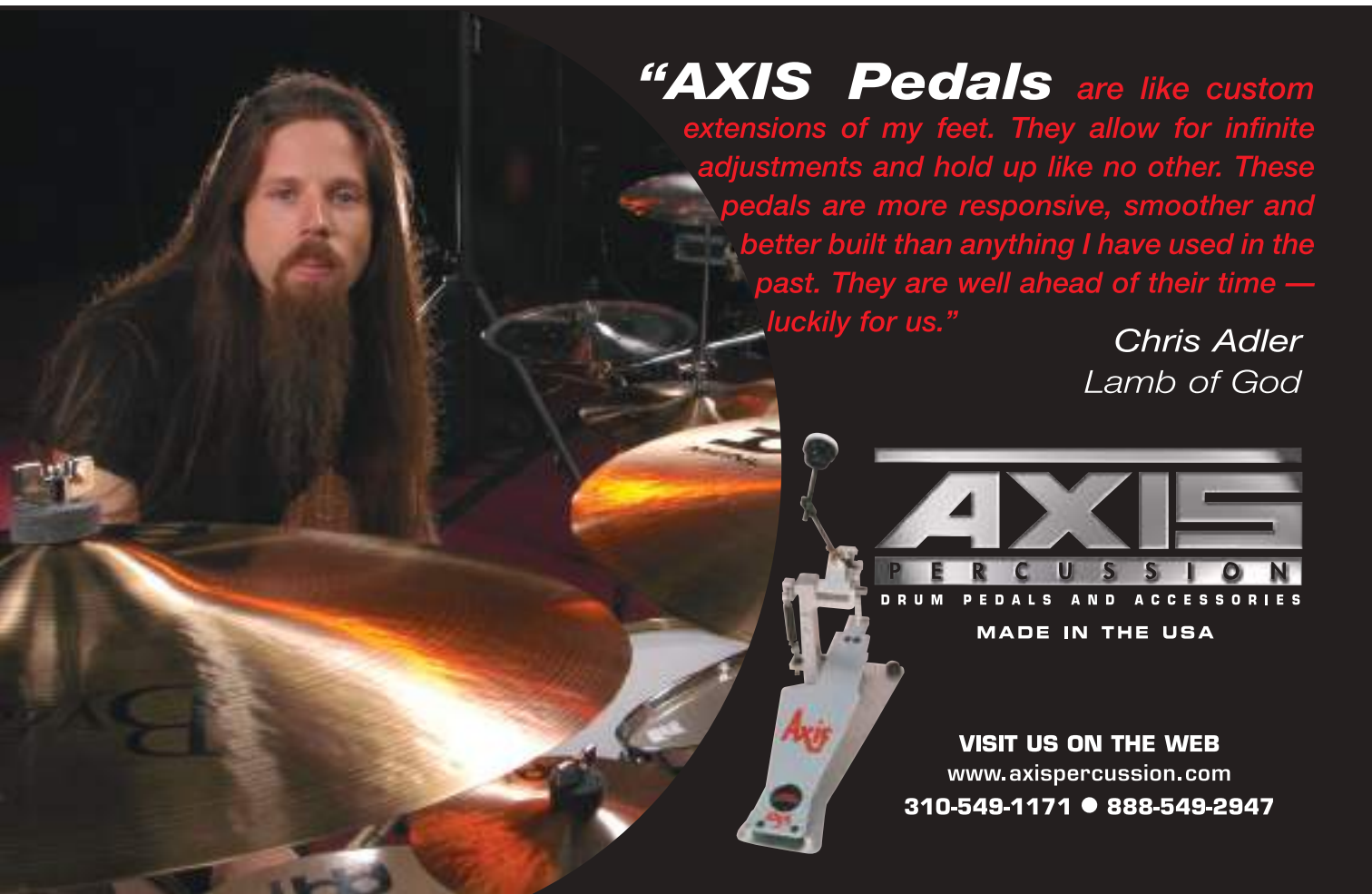
Chris: That's the epitome of the job. If I couldn't figure out how to get excited about going on stage, then there would be a huge problem. We live for this opportunity to share what we've created with people. Everything that makes touring difficult is temporarily alleviated by those ninety minutes. It's an amazing window of time where everything makes sense.

MD: How hard are you hitting on stage?

Chris: It's gotten progressively lighter. That's not to say that I'm just tapping around. But when I first started, I was a basher. A cymbal would only last two days, and I was breaking a stick per song. Now I've learned how to play for endurance without holding back too much. By the end of my performance, I'm still exhausted. But I've learned to add more finesse to my playing than just punching everything.

Getting Up To Par

MD: You didn't start playing drums until after college, when you formed Burn The Priest. How did you get your drumming up to par



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with the other guys in the band so quickly?

Chris: It definitely took some time to get my playing together. But when our guitarist Mark joined the band, it pushed me to just go for it. The last thing I wanted to do was go out and embarrass myself. The other guys were a good bit ahead of me, so there was a lot of practice on my end. I would just take our boom box recordings and play along with them.

I wanted to do something different, but I knew that I wasn't capable of very much. So it was a matter of time, dedication, and practice. I spent a lot of time being frustrated as I tried to break through these little hurdles that I set up for myself. I was hoping that by the first time we played a show, I was on par with everybody else in the band and adding something interesting to the music. I wasn't driven to be the best, but no one was going to walk away from one of our shows and say that the drummer sucked.

MD: How did you learn the basics of playing beats?

Chris: I learned the logistics of the kit by playing along with the first Aerosmith record. That album taught me the basics of the instrument: Counting to four, learning when to use the ride and hi-hat, learning tom fills, and things like that.

MD: How many hours were you practicing by yourself in the early days?

Chris: No fewer than four. When the band would get together, it would be all of 120 minutes before everybody was drunk. [laughs] So I had to start well before them to spend some quality time with the instrument.

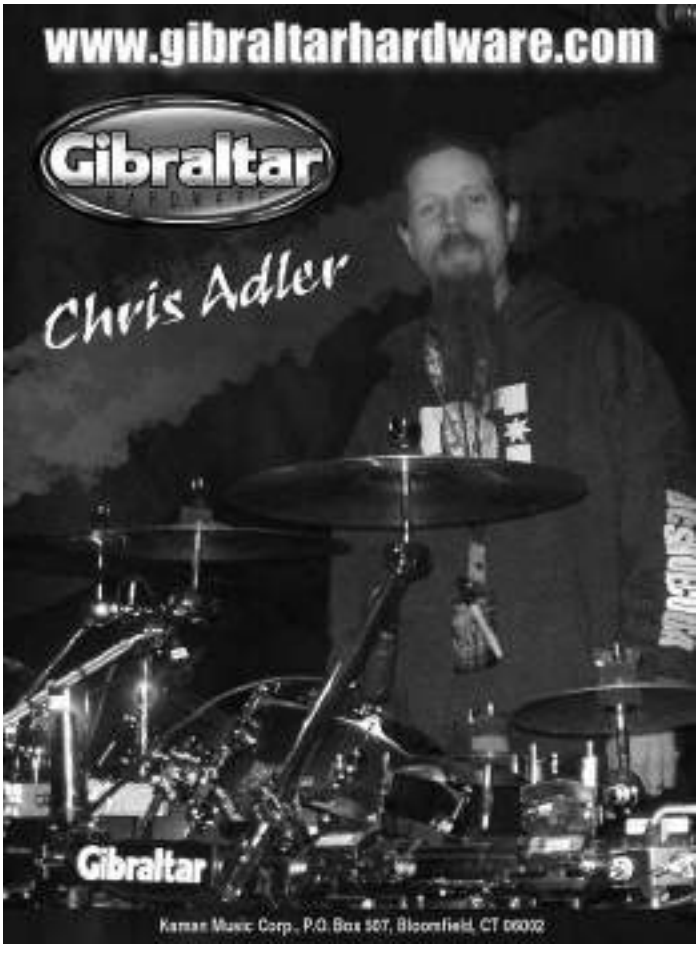
MD: You've really dedicated yourself to your band and your drumming. What would you be doing if you weren't in Lamb Of God?

Chris: That's pretty easy. While all of the other guys had stopped working years ago, I kept working. I had been the director of computing services at a local university. I had a great career, with benefits and everything else, so it was difficult to decide to leave. But this music is in my blood. There's no way that at the end of the day I would want to be sitting on my porch smoking a cigarette regretting not having taken this chance, regardless of how it spits me out at the end. This is what I've always wanted to do, and to have this flattering amount of success is incredible. So I'm going to roll with it for as long as I can.

Meatless Metal
Chris On Becoming A Vegetarian

"Right around the time that I began playing drums, I got sick with strep throat. I hadn't been to the doctor since before I went to college, so when they weighed me I had gained sixty-five pounds. The shock of that made me re-evaluate my diet and exercise. I spent the next six months losing the weight, and one of the things I did was cut out red meat. Then on tour, I started seeing some of the gross things that happen with animals, and I learned a bit more about the processing that takes place to get those things to your table. Once I learned about that, I decided it would be better for me to be a vegetarian."

To hear some of Chris Adler's tracks, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.



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Billy Kilson

With non-stop ideas, a deep well of experience, and a probing, fun-loving spirit, Billy Kilson may be the most "energized" jazz drummer on the planet.

Playing with Fire

Story by Ken Micallef
Photos by Alex Solca

At a recent concert led by pianist Kirk Lightsey at New York's Jazz Standard, Billy Kilson played swinging standards and hushed ballads with a fire usually reserved for Cuban fusion or extreme jazz-rock. Displaying remarkable control, power, and dynamics, Kilson also performed with great sensitivity. When vibraphonist Steve Nelson hinted at a double-time surge, Kilson instantly pounced and the band bolted.

Alternately, Kilson's brushwork was lush and resounding, his sweeping, concentric figure 8's creating a massive bed of sound. When the band played Herbie Hancock's "One Finger Snap" to close the set, the drummer created a lithe Latin pattern between sound sources before erupting in one of his trademark combustible solo explorations. If ever "blowing the roof off the sucker" was an apt description of a drum solo, Kilson lived up to the billing with flurries of single-note power, cross-sticking quakes, and a general feeling of intense agitation in service of the music.

GIGS
Chris Botti
Dave Holland
Ahmad Jamal
Bob James
Larry Carlton

Kilson has uplifted the bandstands of Dave Holland and Ahmad Jamal, cruised a "La La Land" pulse with Bob James and Larry Carlton, and in his current role, upends smooth jazz convention with trumpeter Chris Botti. Fans of Botti's successful albums may be attracted to his music's mellow moods and slick BMW grooves. But with Kilson driving the ship, candy-colored Muzak becomes a torrid stage for improvising à la Miles Davis's *Live Evil* era. That same ideal of '70s fusion-daring recently inspired Kilson to record his second album as a leader, *Pots & Pans.*

Like the best bits of Return To Forever's *Hymn Of The Seventh Galaxy*, Billy Cobham & George Duke's *Live In Europe*, Bill Bruford's *One Of A Kind,* and Earth, Wind & Fire's *Live* distilled into a single record, *Pots & Pans* is the progressive record every drummer would love to make, if only they had the skills, musicians, and confidence. Billy Kilson is a *wellspring* of experience and confidence, whether playing a simple backbeat or one of the manic and mighty odd-metered rhythms found on *Pots & Pans*. Fortified by the lessons of his teacher, the late Alan Dawson, Kilson consistently plays with a level of fire and precision that recalls everyone from Roy Haynes to Billy Cobham.

Pots & Pans is a drummer's record in the best sense of the word. Kilson was unabashed in his desire to make a record that ignores barriers and burns down the stylistic house. "Call" begins the album with a Lenny White ripple of rolling rhythm, followed by a brazen drum solo—both occurring before the one-minute mark. "Fuyu Hanabi" simmers over a propulsive groove that recalls Weather Report, breaking into the Steve Gadd–style stickings of funk burner "Rabbit Kat." "Guardian Soul" is a solo drum piece created with cymbal swells and powerful, African-inspired mallet work. "Leftside" combines a Japanese traffic jam with a Metallica song. And "Nuevo Dingwalls" is heavy metal bebop with a wicked odd-metered heart.

Whether smoking a "Teen Town"–styled pocket with pianist Taylor Egeisti, locking in with bass guru Ron Carter, or frying skulls clean with his own brand of fusion mischief, Billy Kilson always comes to play. His exuberance is contagious, as is his dedication to the kid inside the man. Kilson believes that we should all get in touch with our inner child, that small voice that made us pick up the sticks in the first place. *Pots & Pans* may inspire your own childhood regression back to a time when all things were possible and the drums were the only thing that mattered.

MD: What kind of album did you want to make with *Pots & Pans*?

Billy: My first CD, *While Ur Sleepin'*, was cool. But *Pots & Pans* is aimed at drummers—as well as the kid in me. I took everything I've learned from working with Ahmad Jamal, George Duke, Najee, Freddie Jackson, all the way up to Dave Holland, and tried to incorporate it all. I thought, "What if I just have fun with this? What would I like to listen to as a drummer?"

The music evolved as we started rehearsing. It began going in that Return To Forever direction, but I hadn't really thought of that. But once we started playing, I was hearing Headhunters, Weather Report, and RTF, which is in me. Of course, funk is my first influence, then the fusion stuff. Fusion led me to Miles and Coltrane.

As for the tunes, I wrote down these little bass lines and melodies and didn't record any kind of drum patterns to them. I just wanted to see what would happen organically from the drum throne when the band played. So when I got to rehearsal I had to figure out what to play.

MD: Some records sound like they were recorded by session players, but this sounds as if it was done by a road-hardened band.

Billy: And that's not easy to do. I valued these guys' input and honesty. We pulled it off as a band because we're into everything from Miles and Trane to Slayer, Wayne Shorter, Radiohead, and hip-hop. And, of course, the guys all understand fusion.

MD: You weren't concerned about making what would be labeled "a drummer's record"?

Billy: Not at all. I didn't set out to make a drummer's record, but I would love the public to respect the drums the way we respect the piano. Take a Herbie Hancock or Chick Corea CD. They're burning and playing amazing solos throughout the CD. It's all about the piano, whether it's acoustic or electric instruments. But when a drummer makes a CD, people say he's overplaying.

Why is jazz not the popular music of the day? Thirty years ago, fusion bands filled stadiums. Today, we don't have a lot of drums in popular music anymore. A lot of live drummers are playing to tracks. Drummers don't have the musical "space" to explore like they had in the past.

Drumming From The Gut

MD: You play a drum solo practically from the first note of *Pots & Pans*. Is that meant as a statement of intent?

Billy: Exactly. It's like I'm saying, "You think this is a drummer's record? Well, here's the drum solo." But once you get to the "Groovements," you hear what's happening. The opening "Groovements" are a brief synopsis of what's to come. "Call," "Premier Jour," "A Camelot," "Prelude (Fuyu Hanabi)"—those constitute a suite.

"Call" is the drum solo, and back in the day in Africa, when you call, that was your text message. So I'm paying homage and going back to the tradition of the drums.

MD: I've heard other musicians attempt to make a fusion record with this kind of intensity, but they don't often pull it off. The energy level of *Pots & Pans* is high. How do you generate that level of intensity in the studio?

Billy: That has a lot to do with confidence. I work in the studio a lot. I have a healthy discography, and that gives me confidence. I'm not apprehensive.

This reminds me of when I worked with Ahmad Jamal in 1988. We would be playing in 7/4 and he would play "Satin Doll" in 4/4 over the 7/4 pulse. He would then stand up and smile at me. I would always follow him, and sometimes lose the 7/4. But Ahmad would say, "Billy, don't be apprehensive. I don't care if you make a mistake." My vibe from that day forward was, I have to go for it, mistakes and all.

MD: Your drumming has an irrepressible surge; you give your all on records and in concert. How does one develop the ability to seemingly explode at will as you do?

Billy: I don't like to brag, but I'm pretty confident in what I do. Having those confidence-building experiences, from playing with Ahmad to studying with Alan Dawson…well…I don't feel like I'm going to be wrong.

MD: Do people hire you for that element of confidence?

Billy: I think Chris Botti hired me for that. He saw me playing with the Dave Holland Big Band and invited me to join his group. Then I went to see them. They were playing straight-up smooth jazz, playing with tracks. I told him, "Dude, I don't think I fit into this. I'll go nuts. I'm a slave to the music." But it's worked out well, as you saw when we opened for Sting at the Beacon in New York. Onstage, if there's a certain energy and it's in the moment, I can cut loose with Botti.

One Door Closes...

MD: Were you lucky in that Dave Holland wanted you to go for it, since he didn't contain you?

Billy: Dave never said anything. There was never any inhibition in my performance behind his solo or anyone else's in that band. With the big band, I did have to tame it a little bit. I had to set up figures. There was a conceptual difference there between the big band and the quintet. The quintet was freer. But I had to mind the store with the big band.

I had some insecurities with the big band. I told Dave that I thought someone else should play the big band gigs. I was thinking of how Papa Jo Jones, Shadow Wilson, and Big Sid Catlett would play it. That's the crème de la crème—it all came from those guys. But Dave said, "No, the idea is to extend the quintet to thirteen pieces."

MD: And you're no longer with Holland because…

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Heads: Remo Ambassadors on top of snare and toms, clear Ambassadors on bottoms, coated Pinstripe on bass drum batter with DW (single-ply) on front
Sticks: Vater Billy Kilson Signature model, Vater Wire Tap retractable brushes and T-5 Classic Staccato mallets

Billy: …because Dave fired me, and I'm not sure why. I'm perplexed about it to this day. Dave told me in a phone call forty-eight hours before we were to leave on a European tour, and I thought he was joking. He said, "I have something important to tell you. I think I'm going to change direction. I'm not feeling the sound of the band now, and I'm hearing this other drummer." I started laughing, but he was serious. Well, things happen and we move on.

MD: But the drummer he hired after you is in your mold.

Billy: I've heard that, and that's a compliment. But I was getting hints that I was working on too many gigs for Dave's favor. I was doing Larry Carlton, Bob James, and Chris Botti, so Dave thought I wasn't serious about his gig. He thought I couldn't concentrate and deal if I was doing other gigs. But I'm very proud of the work I did with Dave and the material that was documented. And I've never played with a better bass player.

But we always wonder why one drummer is on a record and not another. Why is Jimmy Cobb on *Kind Of Blue* and not Philly Joe Jones? How did Roy Haynes land the gig with John Coltrane? Everything evolves. *Pots & Pans* grew from my being fired. I see it as a positive. I did a session with Ron Carter recently and afterwards he said, "If Dave Holland isn't keeping you busy, I can." Then he kissed me on the cheek!

MD: And now you have another high-profile gig with Chris Botti.

Billy: And *his* hero is Miles Davis in the '60s. When you hear Chris's band, you can hear that. It's just as challenging to be able to play his tunes, straight for the radio, coupled as well with the London sessions,

where we recorded with the London Symphony Orchestra. There's also a Chris Botti PBS special that's about to come out on DVD.

Hitting Pots & Pans

MD: The fifth track on your album, "Fuyu Hanabi," reminds me of '70s Gong or Bruford.

Billy: For that one, I was imagining, "What if I could play with Jaco?" That was the vibe in "Fuyu Hanabi." It's in 7/4; Dave Holland taught me how to make the 7/4 feel like 4/4. I'm glad when people can't tell it's seven. That was Alan Dawson's thing: You should not feel the break in the odd meter.

MD: You're very exacting on "Rabbit Kat." You practically accent the accents. Is that simply an extension of your energy level?

Billy: The accent is the extension of the energy, but the articulation is the extension of my studies with Alan Dawson. Alan would stress articulation and clarity all the time. He would say it's more important to be clear than it is to be fast. He gave me precise exercises, such as his "Ritual," which involves eighty-eight-plus rudiments. It's a medley comprised of the traditional rudiments, which evolve to include his innovative rudiments. He also includes *Stick Control* and *Syncopation* exercises, which help you to be able to control your hands when you're attempting to play certain rhythms and independent ideas. You want to make each limb equal strength.

MD: Dawson created his own rudiments?

Billy: Yes. [Billy pulls out a brown, weathered case that holds the eleven-page Ritual.] Getting the Ritual from Alan was like Kung Fu: "Snatch the pebble from my hand, Grasshopper." His rudiments are the Draga-Diddle Flam Roll, a five-stroke roll with a flam on the first beat, a nine-stroke flam roll, single ratama-flams, double ratama-flams, drag flams, flam double paradiddles, triplet diddles, flam-flam-flam diddles, Arvin's diddles, Gary's flams, mama dada—a double stroke with flams—paradiddle-diddles, and a page of chops-builders: three-stroke rolls using single strokes and triplet flamadiddles. Alan originally created this whole concept to improve his brushwork.

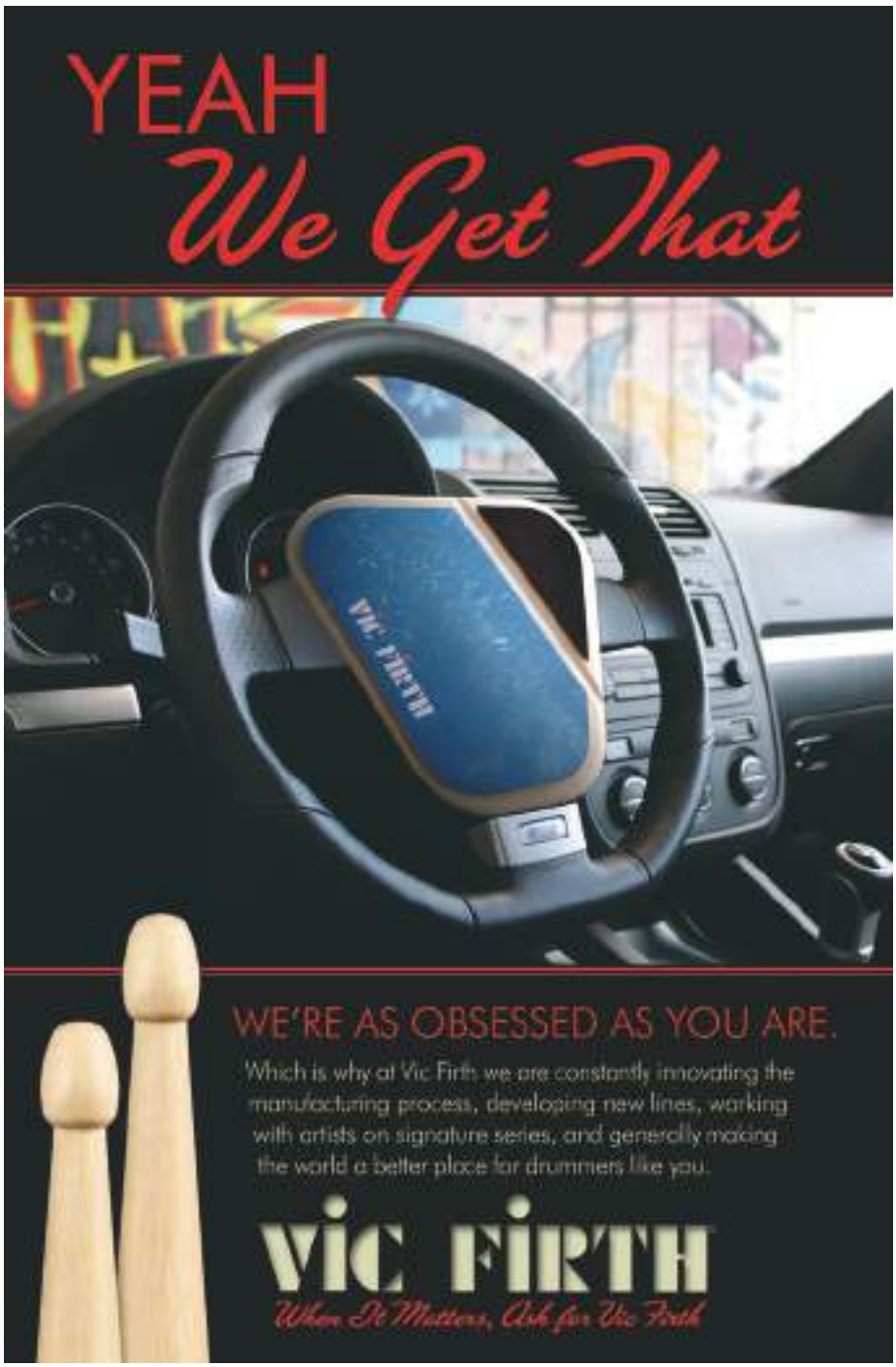
MD: You mastered all the rudiments of the Ritual?

Billy: I had no choice! After every lesson Alan would write out my next lesson. Then one day he gave me the Ritual. [Billy shows a lesson handwritten on a small piece of paper that includes flam and paradiddle variations, *Syncopation* exercises, playing the written patterns on different sources while filling in with triplets, mama dadas, and *Stick Control* exercises.] I studied with Alan for four years. He had me memorize all the material, with the goal being that you would get to the point where he would give you the Ritual. It was all his concepts. Anyway, that's where all my articulation comes from.

MD: What style were you emulating for "Rabbit Kat"?

Billy: Something between Steve Gadd and Harvey Mason. In the intro of that tune I play a double-stroke roll between the hi-hat and the rim; that's the Gadd influence. Those guys mastered that funk-backbeat, R&B/fusion sound.

I like to say that I have a Rolodex in my head, and depending on the bass line, the melody, or the genre I'm playing, I'll spin that Rolodex and access Gadd, Philly Joe,



Harvey Mason, Roy Haynes, or whoever else is in there. Every time I sit down, I'm paying homage to all the guys who came before me.

MD: "Leftside" has some crazy 8th-note elements that remind me of Alphonse Mouzon.

Billy: I was in Sweden for a clinic, and this kid gave me a ride. He was playing Metallica's "St. Anger" in his car. Lars Ulrich was playing this ridiculously fast double bass pattern on that song. So I went out and bought the CD. That's actually what I was channeling for "Leftside."

Also, when we were in Japan, my father-in-law picked us up at the airport, and when we left he drove into oncoming traffic. He had just seen his grandson for the first time and was euphoric. But when he made the wrong turn, everyone was yelling "left side" in Japanese, because he was driving on the right, or wrong, side of the road. That's where the pandemonium on that tune comes from.

MD: The sticking in "Darkness Rising" is feather-light, but still very intense.

Billy: That's my paying homage to Jack DeJohnette.

MD: The solo on that track is manic.

Billy: It has that swing into 7/4, a kind of funk backbeat. It crosses between four and seven, so I had a blast being free and playing across the barline. And that also taps into Rachmaninoff. His first prelude is five-over-four, but it feels like triplets. It's fluttery and soft, yet has this passive kind of aggression.

Chris Botti On Kilson

Unleashing The Charisma

As a superstar session player, trumpeter Chris Botti has worked with Sting, Bob Dylan, Paul Simon, and Aretha Franklin, among many others. But smooth jazz is where his individual personality has come to the fore. Botti and his band demolish smooth jazz clichés in concert, however, turning in blistering performances that recall Miles Davis's *Live Evil* period. As for Botti's choice of drummer, well, he puts it bluntly: "Billy Kilson is the secret to my success.

"I give Billy a lot of credit for my success."

"Billy brings a combination of artistry and a jazz sensibility to my music," Botti continues. "But beyond that, there are intangibles that you can't place your finger on, like his ability to be completely charismatic behind the drums. It's hard to be a great drummer and be charismatic. You might be charismatic to four drummers, because you play a paradiddle correctly. But to be charismatic to an audience and still have integrity as a drummer is really a tough thing. When you're able to project your personality past the drums and be an amazing drummer coming from influences like Tony Williams, then you're on to something.

"From the moment Billy sat behind the drums at our first rehearsal, it was like sitting in front of a rocket ship. And since he's joined my band, my career has been a complete rocket ship ride. I give Billy a lot of credit for my success. Absolutely, he really is the star of the show. When I'm done playing a solo, I move to the side of the stage because people want to see Billy.

"Often when you get somebody who is an incredible showman behind the drums, their playing is fluff. That's not the case with Billy. The fact is, he is playing unbelievable stuff. Just his ability to change dynamics and feel on a dime—*bang*—is impressive. We can be in an arena in front of 10,000 people, and Billy's most subtle hi-hat playing comes through. He draws in the audience with his personality and playing. Sometimes it's very subtle, and that's what I really love about his drumming.

"Billy really understands the kind of jazz interaction I like, the more esoteric fundamentals. But when I need a backbeat, he plays with a great feel, not a rigid drum machine style. He has all this interaction and the ability to take off at a moment's notice into some other kind of attitude. There aren't a lot of drummers who can do that. No question, he's given me and my music the missing element."

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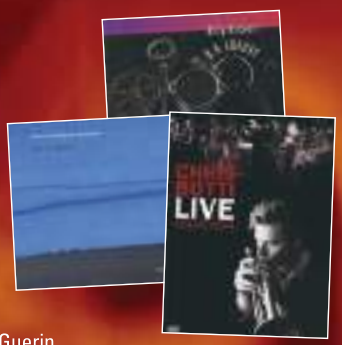
Billy's Best On Record

Artist	Album
Billy Kilson's B.K. Groove	Pots & Pans
Billy Kilson's B.K. Groove	While Ur Sleepin'
Chris Botti	Live: With Orchestra And Special Guests (DVD)
Donald Brown	Continuum
Dave Holland Quintet	Not For Nothin'
Dave Holland Big Band	What Goes Around
Austin Peralta (With Ron Carter)	Maiden Voyage



Favorites

Artist	Album	Drummer
Miles Davis	Milestones	Philly Joe Jones
Miles Davis	Kind Of Blue	Jimmy Cobb
John Coltrane Quartet	A Love Supreme	Elvin Jones
Rachmaninoff	24 Preludes	
Joni Mitchell	Dreamland	
Return To Forever	Romantic Warrior	Russ Kunkel, John Guerin, Vinnie Colaiuta, Peter Erskine, Brian Blade
Jill Scott	Beautifully Human	Lenny White
Tony Williams Lifetime	Believe It	Vidal Davis, George "Spanky" McCurdy
The Notorious B.I.G.	Life After Death	Tony Williams
		DJ Premier, Sean "Puffy" Combs (programming)

When I'm playing insane and across the barline, you might wonder where the time is, but I'm feeling pulse, not so much literal beats. I'm not thinking form, but I am hearing the bass line. On John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme,* where Elvin takes a solo, it sounds like he's out of time. But he's constantly *in* time. It's about feeling the time as opposed to dictating it. That's also what Tony Williams talked about a lot—playing pulse. So feeling centered with the time and internalizing the pulse is key, and then what's between the beats is all on you.

MD: What are you thinking about when you play a manic solo like in "Darkness Rising"?

Billy: I'm thinking about two things. Like for my solo on "Claressence" [from *Extended Play*: *Live At Birdland*] with Dave Holland, even though it's in 4/4, I'm singing the form of the melody and the tune. On "Darkness Rising," I'm constantly singing the bass line.

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Billy Kilson

Alan taught an exercise using "Satin Doll." You play *Stick Control* exercises on the snare while you sing the song. "Satin Doll" is a thirty-two-bar form, so as you sing the song, you literally trade fours with yourself. The first four measures you're playing time on the kit. For the following four measures, you play the first exercise or line of *Stick Control*. You're still playing the hi-hat on 2 and 4, with your snare drum playing the right-hand notation and the bass drum playing the left-hand notation. So you do that for four measures and then go back to playing time, singing "Satin Doll," or whatever song you want, over the exercise. Then you go to the next line of *Stick Control*. That's a good exercise.

MD: Do you have to work up to that expression of chaos? Your solos can be very raw.

Billy: When you're channeling that energy from the center of your soul, who knows what happens. I don't start out thinking, This is going to be bombastic. I just want to explore and take a chance. I want to skirt the boundaries.

MD: Can you explain the different groove sections in "Nuevo Dingwalls"? The second section reminds me of "Scatterbrained,"

a new beat rising

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from Jeff Beck's *Blow By Blow*. Then a marching snare drum section goes into a Latin groove, then a saxophone duet. There are multiple sections before the drum solo.

Billy: That's like a drum suite, but it wasn't written that way. It's a simple fourteen-bar head opened up into various sections. It was organic. I set up the vibe and we were off. It begins with an African funk groove. Remember how Billy Cobham would have a long drum intro on some tracks, or those long suites on Stanley Clarke's *Journey To Love*?

MD: In one section you're playing a rapid-fire snare drum pattern over a bass drum montuno.

Billy: The bass drum figure is in 5/4 and I'm playing quarter-note triplets followed by a dotted-quarter note on the downbeat of 4 and an 8th on the upbeat of 5. It's sort of like a loop. I listen to a lot of African music, which influences that kind of thing. I'll do that same snare pattern in five or seven.

MD: You solo on that track, once again, opening with blazing rolls. It's a real statement.

Billy: That's what I was going for. Then it goes into a clave in five, though there is a Max Roach tom thing happening over that. I'm playing free and thinking pulse, but I'm also thinking Max. Then we go into a 5/4 montuno.

Live Lightning

MD: On your gig with Kirk Lightsey you sometimes played with the right hand very far off the ride cymbal, bringing your hand almost back to your shoulder.

Billy: It's a reaction. When the bass player is walking high up on the neck, I'm feeling the quarter note more intensely and reacting to that. It depends on the energy. If the bass player is walking low, I'll open up the ride more. I'll accentuate what he's playing. When he plays closer to the bridge, I don't want to play so busy; that will detract from the pulse.

MD: But what does playing high off the cymbal give you?

Billy: It's not a sound difference, it's a feel difference. It's how it feels to me. It's all subconscious.

MD: Do you use less body language if the music is busier?

Billy: If the music is busier, I want to be *more* relaxed. When you're playing slower, it's tense because there's more space between the notes. It's harder than playing fast.

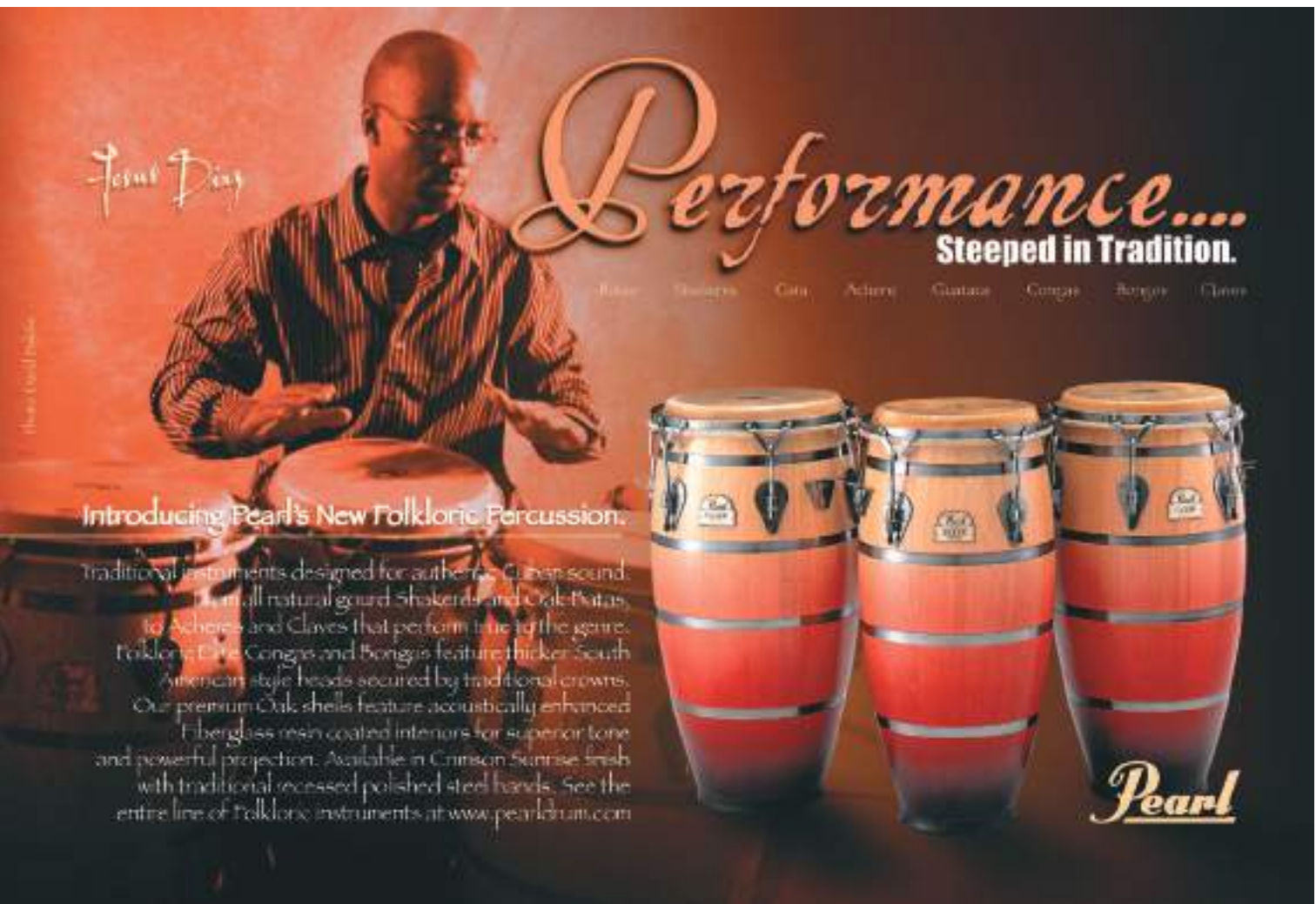
Because of my movements, I was always teased for dancing behind the drums. I couldn't sit still. I wanted to have perfect posture. But if you see me swaying back and forth and my head bobbing, I couldn't be happier. That's the little kid in me.

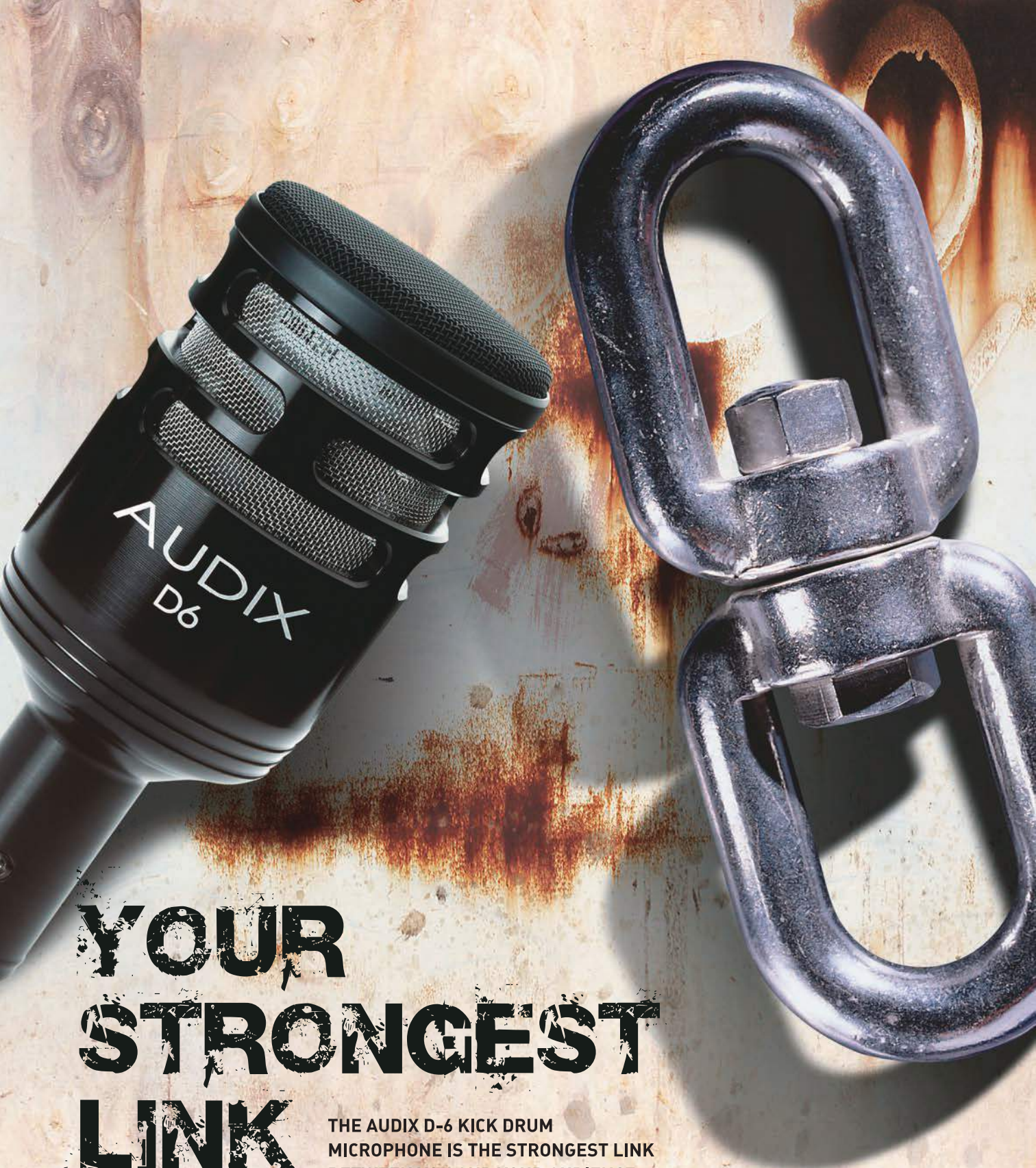
MD: You played with great dynamics throughout the night. What dictates the dynamic shifts?

Billy: Again, it's a reaction to the soloists. Ahmad Jamal would conduct from the bandstand. We would play miniscule dynamics, down to *ppp*, and then he would slowly raise his hands and it would get more intense as we played the same groove up and down. I couldn't do that before I played with Ahmad Jamal.

MD: Your right-side ride cymbal is very dry, while the left one is more sparkling. What does that variation give you?

Billy: It just depends on the tune and what





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Billy Kilson

I'm hearing in my Rolodex of sounds. Some old-school drummers say you can get many sounds from one cymbal, but I need a couple of different cymbals for various colors and timbres. My cymbals are drastically different. The flat ride on the right is great for a wash if I'm playing more quietly. If we're playing more uptempo, I use Jack DeJohnette's [Sabian] Encore ride on the right. But I only use those cymbals in that setting. If there's a horn player, I'll bring out the Fierce ride that I used with Dave Holland.

On my record, I changed both cymbals, adding a flat ride and a Manhattan Jazz. With Chris Botti I use the same setup. But live, I use an El Sabor. It has a huge bell to cut through. Excluding the jazz trio setting, I use the Manhattan Jazz ride. Last night with piano and vibes, the Manhattan Jazz ride helped me to control my sound. It's important to understand the timbres of the instruments you play.

Sticking It

MD: You play very fast, clean, and powerful patterns incorporating rimclicks. How do you hold the stick against the rim?

Billy: A lot has to do with the stick placement on the rim. I have the shank of the stick on the rim. The power comes from the shank. Also, some drummers keep all their fingers on the stick. I hold the stick with only the thumb and the index finger, and the other three fingers are off the stick or laying on the head. That gives me more dexterity with the stick. It also sounds better with the fingers off. And it's easier to play doubles that way. I also have more control over the dynamics with the three fingers off the stick.

MD: You sit rather high.

Billy: I was having lower back problems, so I started sitting higher and got rid of the second tom that I always used with Dave Holland. That allowed me to move the ride cymbal closer.

When I play the ride, I choke up a little bit on the stick. And when I cover that wide arc, bringing the stick back to my shoulder, I'm playing the cymbal with the very tip. And it could be a subconscious thing, where I think I'll have more attack if I play hard with the bead of the stick. It's just an idiosyncrasy that I can't explain. Sometimes I'll crash as I'm riding by just glancing the cymbal with the shank of the stick during the ride pattern. I'm choking up again and using my wrists more to play softer. Some drummers use their wrists and their arms for more power.

I once asked Max Roach how he was able to play so fast. He said, "I'm thinking half-time, and I am relaxing." And his fingers were opening and closing. So I concentrated on developing my finger technique. There's no effort. For power, I use rimshots. I let the stick do its own thing.

MD: The whip effect.

Billy: Yes. It's more precise using the fingers and letting the stick rebound. To play fast you use your fingers. [Kilson plays a single-stroke roll, getting louder as the sticks rebound higher off the head.] I can control the sticks softly with my wrists. Then I get much faster and louder using my fingers.

MD: What do you hope drummers get from listening to *Pots & Pans*?

Billy: I hope that they'll recognize that their thoughts are their own. It's important to express your thoughts by any means necessary. There are no limits or boundaries, except for fear or apprehension. In order to express your own thoughts, they have to stem from you. I wrote all of the music on *Pots & Pans*. I'm proud of what I do as a sideman, but I'm really proud of this record.

Pots & Pans also tapped into the kid inside of me, the kid that is inside of all us drummers. I think that sometimes we forget what brought us to the drums: that insatiable appetite to express ourselves, that freedom and the giddiness. That's why we did it, because it was so much fun. If I can't have fun playing, I'll stay home, sit on my couch, and watch reruns of *Sanford & Son*.

To hear some of Billy's greatest performances, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

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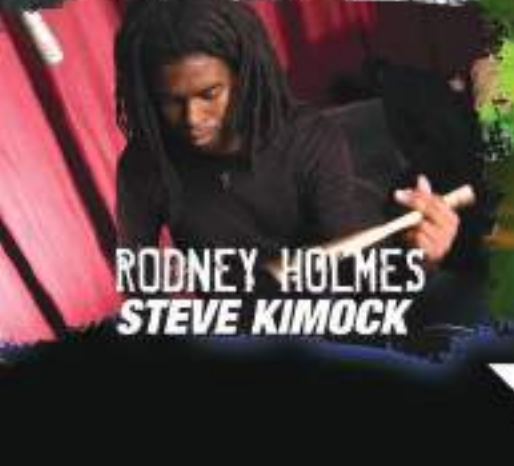

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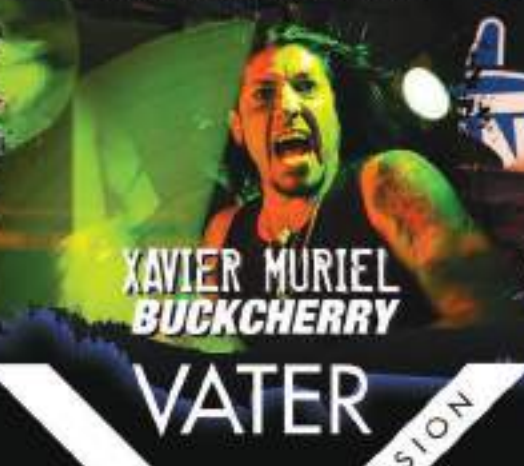

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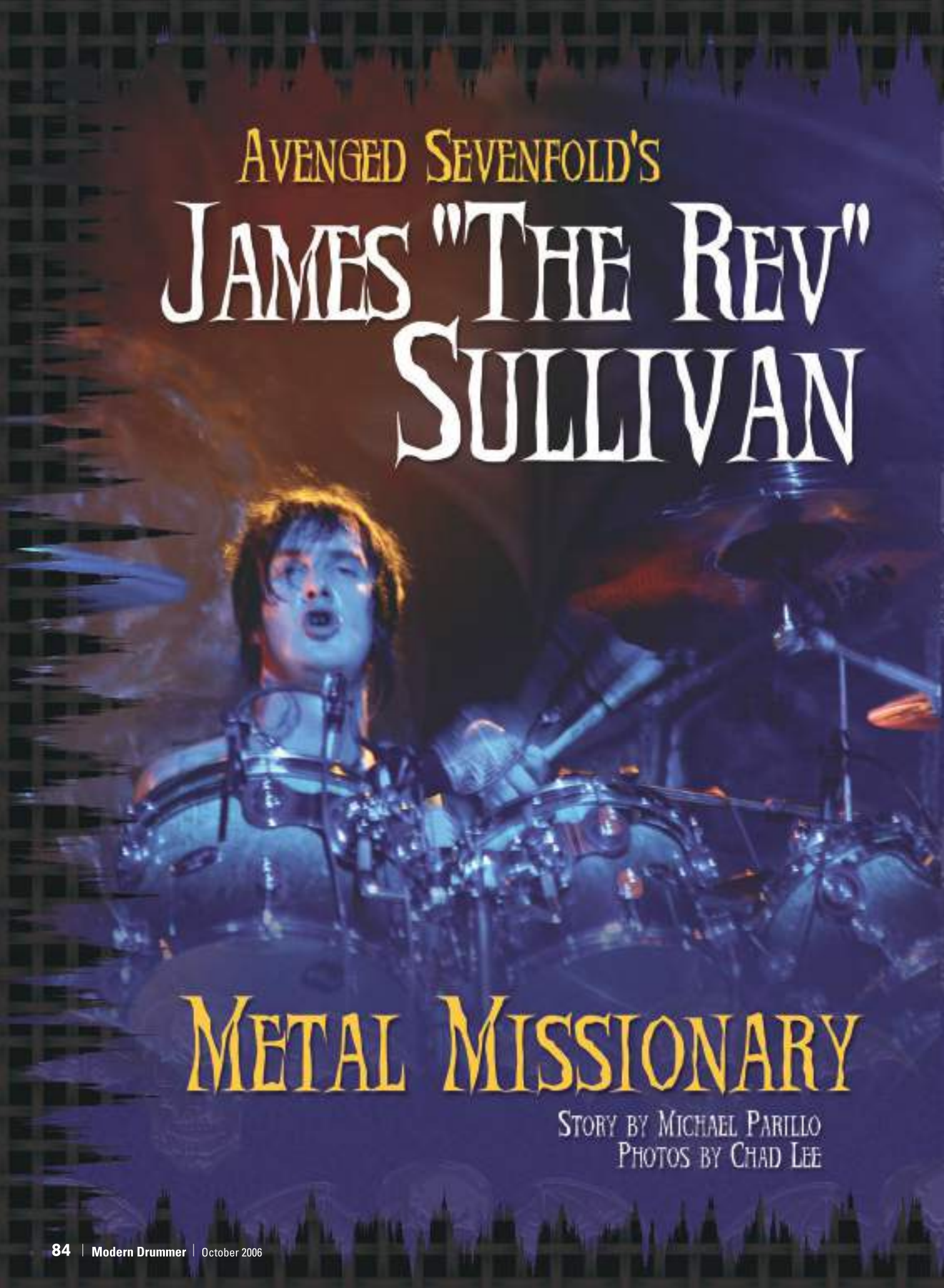


Avenged Sevenfold's James "The Rev" Sullivan

Metal Missionary

Story by Michael Parillo
Photos by Chad Lee

THE SUPERCHARGED AVENGED SEVENFOLD TIMEKEEPER KEEPS OLD-SCHOOL METAL ALIVE WITH BRUTE FORCE, MACHINE-LIKE PRECISION, AND A FLAIR FOR THE DRAMATIC.

Avenged Sevenfold does nothing halfway. From their wacky aliases to their arm-covering tattoos to their breakneck tempos to their legendary hedonistic appetites, the five bandmembers are devoted to classic metal excess. But behind the carefully cultivated bad-boy image—which is encouraged by the press as much as by the band—lies a simple, not very sensational-sounding truth: This is just a bunch of buddies who love heavy music and have put in all the hard work that metal mastery requires, far from the roaring crowds and spoils of life on the road.

Make no mistake, it takes work. Lead guitarist Synyster Gates (a.k.a. Brian Haner) isn't just ripping frantic shredster solos while set in a rocking pose at the lip of the stage, though that would be plenty. He's giving his fans a proper spectacle, running miles up, down, and around A7X's bi-level stage set, leaving burning runs of dead-on 32nd notes in his wake without skimping on guitar-hero gestures. The same goes for singer M. Shadows (Matthew Sanders), guitarist Zacky Vengeance (Zachary Baker), and bassist Johnny Christ (Jonathan Seward), who get a full cardiovascular workout every night while delivering the musical goods.

But the hardest-working man in Avenged Sevenfold is James Sullivan, The Rev—or, if you prefer, The Reverend Tholomew Plague. Perched high behind his double bass kit, below a huge red-backlit skull with flapping, smoke-blowing bat wings, The Rev punches the clock. And punches it again, and again. And then he just smashes it to bits.

Sullivan is the rare drummer who can combine power, brains, finesse, and good old-fashioned metal showmanship. Like his lead guitarist pal, he gives the crowd a lot to watch while plowing his way through seriously demanding music. He pulls off complex hand-foot combinations with metronomic precision at wickedly fast tempos, and he does it all *while* twirling his sticks. He slashes and slices at his kit, his long arms flying at full extension, first this way, then that. His all-out exuberance is a big reason why an A7X show is lots of fun.

"It's funny," says the drummer, "of all my influences, Tommy Lee is a visual influence. I never thought I'd have one of those." Growing up with his bandmates in Orange County, California, Sullivan, who's now twenty-five, had plenty of musical influences as well. His A7X aesthetic has been shaped by listening to vintage metal-heads like Vinnie Paul and Paul Bostaph, but his tastes include everything from Oingo Boingo to Frank Zappa. Sullivan has also sung and played piano in Pinkly Smooth, an occasional side project that includes Synyster Gates.

But of course Avenged Sevenfold is his main gig, and 2005's *City Of Evil* is the band's most powerful statement yet. The LP blends heavy metal with tuneful hard rock, showing the influence of band favorites Pantera and Guns N' Roses. It also reflects M. Shadows' decision to move away from the screaming that characterized A7X's first two releases, 2001's *Sounding The Seventh Trumpet* and 2003's *Waking The Fallen*.

Evil is a throwback to the age of epic metal, an album's album that begs to be listened to as a whole rather than slipped piecemeal into shuffle mode. The songs—punishing yet melodic—pushed Sullivan to craft his craziest, fastest, most creative patterns yet. And just wait till you hear how he did it. Keep reading for lots more on The Rev!

MD: Let's start at the beginning. When did you first pick up the sticks?

Rev: I started taking drum lessons when I was about ten years old. Actually, I took lessons for like two weeks when I was five, but the guy wouldn't let me play his kit, because I was a little kid. At ten I got a Sears catalog kit, kind of a toy. My parents told me they'd buy me a real kit if I took lessons for a year. And I did. I always wanted to play.

MD: Did you keep up with lessons?

Rev: Yeah, for about six years, until I got into high school. Then I started playing in bands all the time and eventually ended up playing in this one.

MD: Did you study different styles or mainly rock?

Rev: It was mainly rock and funk. But within a year my teacher, Jeanette Wrate, had me playing [Frank Zappa's] "The Black Page" and stuff like that. She was trained by Elvin Jones, and she's a really eclectic, really good teacher.

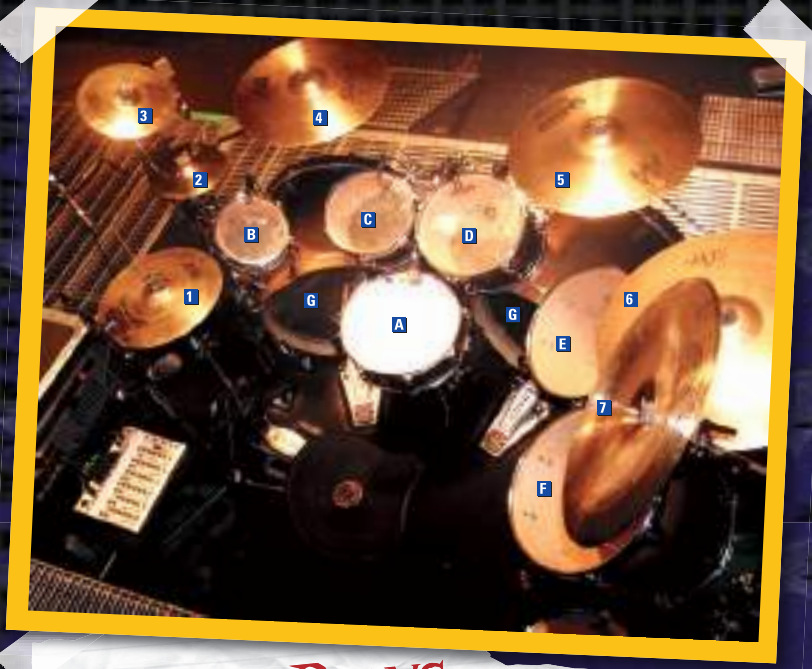
MD: Wow. At eleven years old you were playing "The Black Page"?

Rev: Oh, yeah. She put me in her college percussion ensemble. We'd play Zappa and Bill Bruford stuff, things like that.

MD: Do you like Zappa and King Crimson and other progressive rock?

Rev: I like it a lot. I was raised on that stuff as much as rock and metal.

MD: So you learned to read. Is that a skill you ever brush up on?

Rev: I haven't been reading much in the past few years, but it's definitely still there. I was pretty good at it. I could sight-read.

VENGEFUL DRUMS

Drums: DW in wood-to-black fade finish

- **A.** 4x14 bell brass snare
- **B.** 8x8 tom
- **C.** 9x10 tom
- **D.** 10x12 tom
- **E.** 12x14 tom
- **F.** 14x16 tom
- **G.** 18x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian

1. 14" AAX hi-hats
2. 8" Portnoy Signature Max splash
3. 10" AAX splash
4. 18" AAX Metal crash
5. 18" AAX Metal crash
6. 22" AAX ride
7. 19" AAX Metal Chinese

Hardware: DW 9000 series pedals and stands, including bass drum pedals with standard spring tension, Roc-N-Soc throne

Heads: Evans coated G2 or Power Center Reverse Dot on snare batter, Hazy 300 snare-side, clear Hydraulics or G2s on tom batters with clear G1s on bottoms, clear G4s on bass drums with AF Patch, black EQ3 on fronts (EQ Pads for muffling)

Sticks: Pro-Mark 5B Natural

DAVE MATTACKS CYMBAL SET UP:
14" K HiHats, 20" Oriental Crash of Doom, 15" Azuka Latin Multi Crash Hand & Stick, 20" K Custom Ride, 18" K Constantinople Crash, 20" Oriental Classic China.

DENNIS CHAMBERS CYMBAL SET UP:
13" K Mastersound HiHats, 16" K Custom Fast Crash, 18" K Custom Fast Crash, 22" K Custom Ride, 17" K Custom Fast Crash, 20" A Earth Ride, 20" Oriental Crash of Doom, Dennis Chambers Artist Series Drumsticks, Dennis Chambers "DC" Double Stick Mallet, Dennis Chambers Artist Collection Stick Bag

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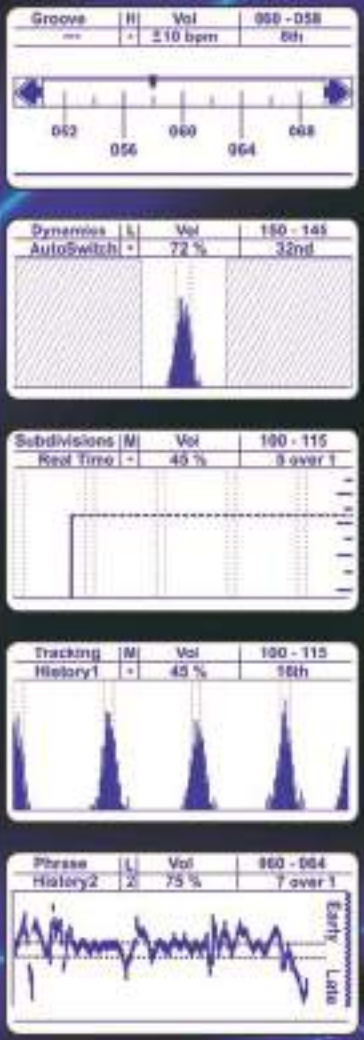

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- 7 over 1
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The Rev

MD: It sounds like you were something of a prodigy.

Rev: Thanks, dude. That's what they said. [laughs] Any ten-year-old kid who's good, I'm pretty sure they always say that.

MD: Were you playing double bass from the beginning?

Rev: No. I was always into it, but I never knew how to get my left foot to catch up to my right. I never thought I could be as fast as I wanted to be on the double kick until the past four years or so. I realized it's a muscle thing: You just train the muscles. That was harder than learning any of the interdependence or funk stuff. Getting your muscles up to par for double bass is ridiculous.

MD: When you first started, what bands were you into?

Rev: I was crazy into Pantera and Slayer and tried to steal all their drum licks. And now it's cool to be friends with Vinnie Paul. I never thought that would happen. He's my idol. But I was also buying every Zappa and Chick Corea record, stuff like that, to listen to Bozzio and Weckl.

MD: How did Avenged Sevenfold come together?

Rev: For me the band formed right after high school. I think Shadows and Zacky were seniors in high school and were just messing around. And Synyster, Shadows, and I have been best friends since seventh or eighth grade. We had been in bands with each other before, but not all together.

MD: Did things start happening for the band before you'd even had the chance to consider music as a career?

Rev: Yeah. We were just doing it for fun. The idea of making money playing music never crossed my mind. And then we were offered some tours, and we were kind of fit into a certain scene on our first record. Just the idea of touring was awesome. Getting to leave the state sounded like fun. Our passion was playing music, so we just did it, and things started happening.

MD: You were just eighteen when you made your first record. Does it hold up for you?

Rev: It's really fun to listen to, actually. We'll revisit it and crack up listening to where our heads were at, at that time. The whole record is a drum fill, and it's all just as fast as I can go with my hands. It's ridiculous.

MD: There's a clear sense of melody running through your music. Do you like pop in addition to heavier stuff? I think of Queen sometimes when I listen to the band.

Rev: We listened to a lot of Queen. Freddie is one of my favorite singers, and Brian May is one of my favorite guitarists. All of us are big Queen fans and Dream Theater fans, and I'm a big Rush fan. Even though they're progressive and they're insane players, there's always a hook to latch onto. We're fans of having poppier hooks—whatever sounds good.

MD: I've read that you guys aren't religious. Why all the biblical imagery in your songs? Is it just because it goes nicely with heavy music?

Rev: We have a song called "Chapter Four" that's about the first murder ever, which is a story in the Bible. Matt [Shadows] writes all the lyrics, and he just thinks the first murder is a cool story. The imagery has always been in the back of our minds. Matt and I were kicked out of private schools and Catholic schools and raised having the bible thumped at us. But

we're not trying to promote the Bible in this way or that, or denounce it—it's just imagery.

MD: Shadows had some problems with his voice before you made this album. Did that influence his decision to do more singing as opposed to screaming?

Rev: I remember the day we decided to stop screaming. It was our last show before we went home to write *City Of Evil*. Matt was just really, really sick of screaming. He'd had surgery a year before. They took out a blood vessel in his vocal cords that would flame up and close up his throat. He could still scream today if he wanted to, but he got sick of it. I'm a fan of some bands that scream, but we thought the whole scene was getting retarded. We wrote everything keeping in mind that we weren't going to scream anymore, and all of a sudden it was much more fun. Everything's so musical—it's all about melody and cool guitar riffs instead of just simpleton riffs over and over again that you can scream over.

MD: You play with serious energy on *City Of Evil*, like you're harnessing the intensity of a live show. Was that tough to muster?

Adam Leota

Rev: To get the intensity of the stage, I play in the studio with Synyster Gates and a click track. We play the songs with a click live too, so it does feel like the stage, just without the crowd screaming.

On *Waking The Fallen*, we wanted to simplify everything a lot. We did, but at times I wasn't very happy with that as a drummer. It was good for the record, but I held back a lot. On this one I didn't want to hold back at all in places that I thought called for crazy fills.

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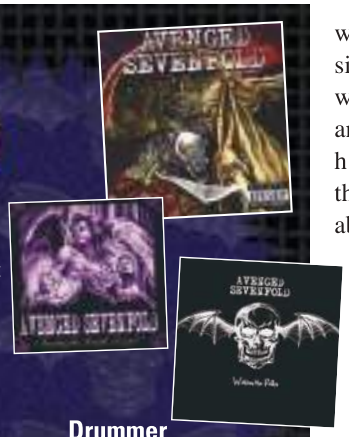
The Rev On Record

Artist	Album
Avenged Sevenfold	City Of Evil
Avenged Sevenfold	Waking The Fallen
Avenged Sevenfold	Sounding The Seventh Trumpet
Avenged Sevenfold	Warmness On The Soul
Pinkly Smooth	Unfortunate Snort



Faves

Artist	Album	Drummer
Slayer	Divine Intervention	Paul Bostaph
Pantera	Far Beyond Driven	Vinnie Paul
Tool	Ænima	Danny Carey
Soundgarden	Superunknown	Matt Cameron
Dream Theater	Train Of Thought	Mike Portnoy
Primus	Frizzle Fry	Tim Alexander
Sting	Ten Summoner's Tales	Vinnie Colaiuta
Slayer	Seasons In The Abyss	Dave Lombardo
Slipknot	Vol. 3: The Subliminal Verses	Joey Jordison
The Police	Greatest Hits	Stewart Copeland

I decided I was going to have every part written out—every fill, everything—and try to make it as creative as possible and not just as fast as possible. I'm really happy with the way it turned out. And I want to outdo it on the next record by a hundred percent.

It's funny, because I broke my hand four weeks before going into the studio. It took six weeks to heal, so we pushed it back two weeks and went right in. So I had a cast on, and I was writing out the drum parts while holding the stick with my finger and thumb. It was weird. I was hoping I'd be able to play everything by the time I got to the studio.

MD: You must have had to do some serious woodshedding to get ready to record.

Rev: Yeah, the first week of preproduction we'd play the songs over and over again all day. I'd just exhaust myself.

MD: When you were coming up with your parts, were you just writing them in your head without actually playing them?

Rev: I was kinda tapping them out in the last couple weeks of healing. But mostly when I'd get to a crazy fill, I'd just think it in my head.

MD: Would you write something out, take a look, and then maybe try to take it further over the top?

Rev: Yeah, that would definitely happen, and the opposite too. I'd have something insane written out in my head, and then when I'd play it with the music, it would

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be totally stepping on everyone's toes.

MD: Did you ever write out your parts in the past?

Rev: On the first record I didn't write out anything really. It was all improv, and I recorded it in one day with just one take for almost every song, which is ridiculous. So there are some errors on there, but there's also some really cool shit.

For the second one I wrote out the beats pretty much, and some of the fills, but there's a lot of improv on it. It was a lot more simple, so I didn't need as much preparation. The preparation was convincing myself to take it easy.

MD: How have you built up your speed and endurance?

Rev: The endurance comes from playing live shows. For speed on double kick, I just play to a click and increase the tempo every day and play only with my feet. I pretty much just kill myself in my room. My hands have probably been about this fast for a while. It's not bragging or anything, but it would be hard for me to get any faster. I don't know if I'm ever going to be able to.

Live, we play all the fastest songs from the album and the faster ones from *Waking The Fallen* too. Every time we write out a new set list it gets harder. And the first week is a battle. I don't drink much the first week, because it's hard to keep my endurance up. But now we're on the last leg of the tour, and it's cake. Doing a live show every night really helps in ways you probably can't get just by yourself.

MD: Do you warm up before you go on?

Rev: I warm up off and on for like an hour before the show, just so my muscles aren't like, "What the hell is happening?" I'll play too hard on the first couple songs and start cramping up. It's hard with in-ear monitors—I don't have my toms and cymbals in there right now, just kick and snare. So it was hard to adjust to not beating the shit out of them.

MD: Your snare sound is very tight. Is that a function of having such fast tempos?

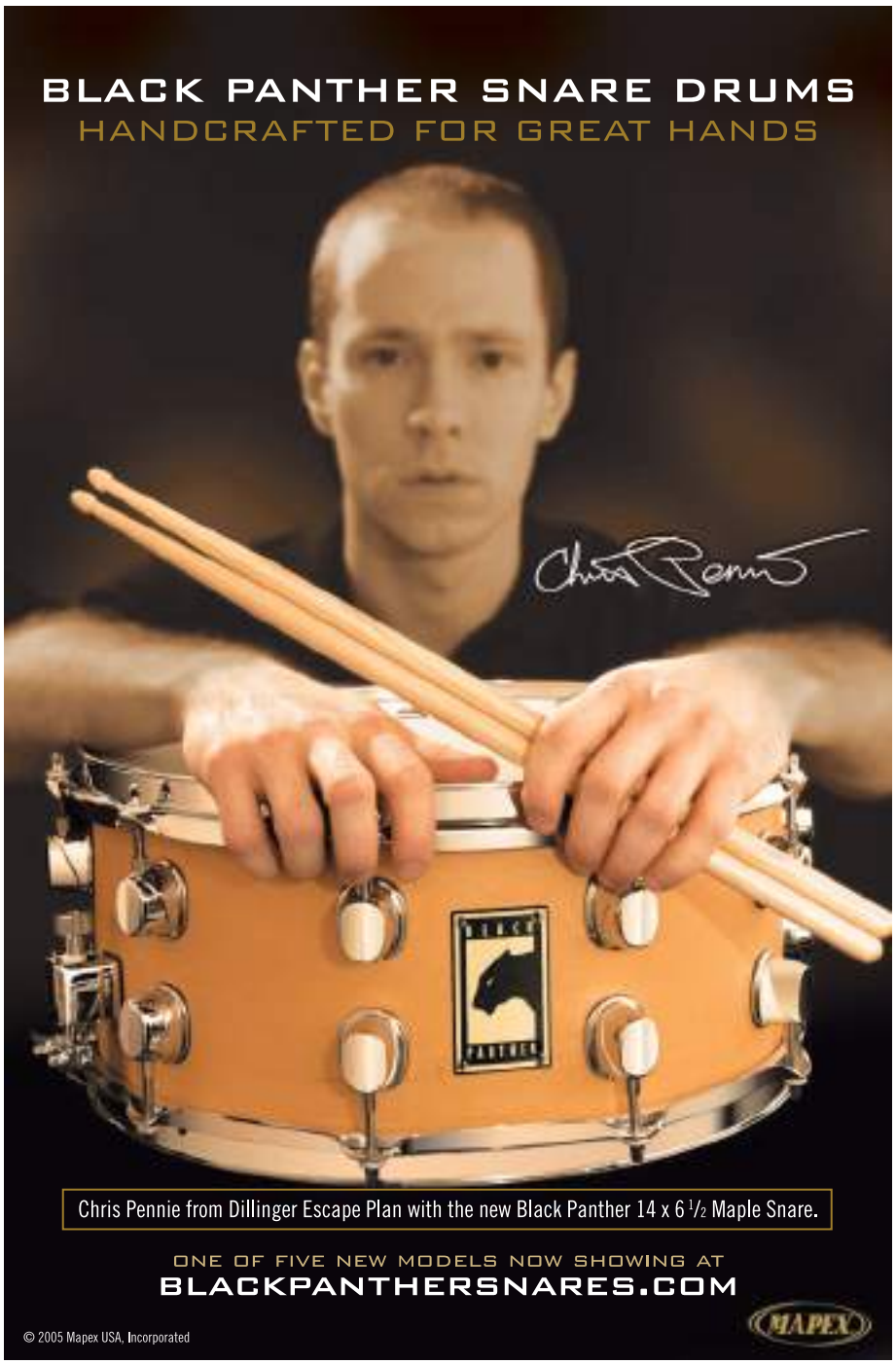
Rev: Yeah, I kind of need that. I'm always rimshotting, on all the rolls and everything. You need it to punch through, in the same way the kick punches through. I get the kick real clicky as well. "Seize The Day" and "Strength Of The World" are much slower songs, and there's room for a bigger snare sound. So we went for that a little bit more on those. But most of the songs are written to be fast and aggressive, so I like that tighter snare.

MD: Are you mostly a single-stroke guy?

Rev: Definitely in this band. The way we mix our records and go for our sounds, all my ghost notes and anything with double strokes usually gets lost, because I can't do it as hard as rimshotting the hell out of the snare. But hopefully I'll get the chance to expand someday, because when I go to mess around on the kit it's mostly rudimental stuff and not single strokes. There are a couple parts on *City Of Evil* that use double strokes, like the break at the end of "Burn It Down."

MD: You do this on different tunes, but in the middle of "I Won't See You Tonight Part 2" on *Waking The Fallen*, you're playing singles on the basses and then you move them to the snare. Basically the same quick pattern goes from your feet to your hands. Did it take a while to get your hands and feet to sync up?

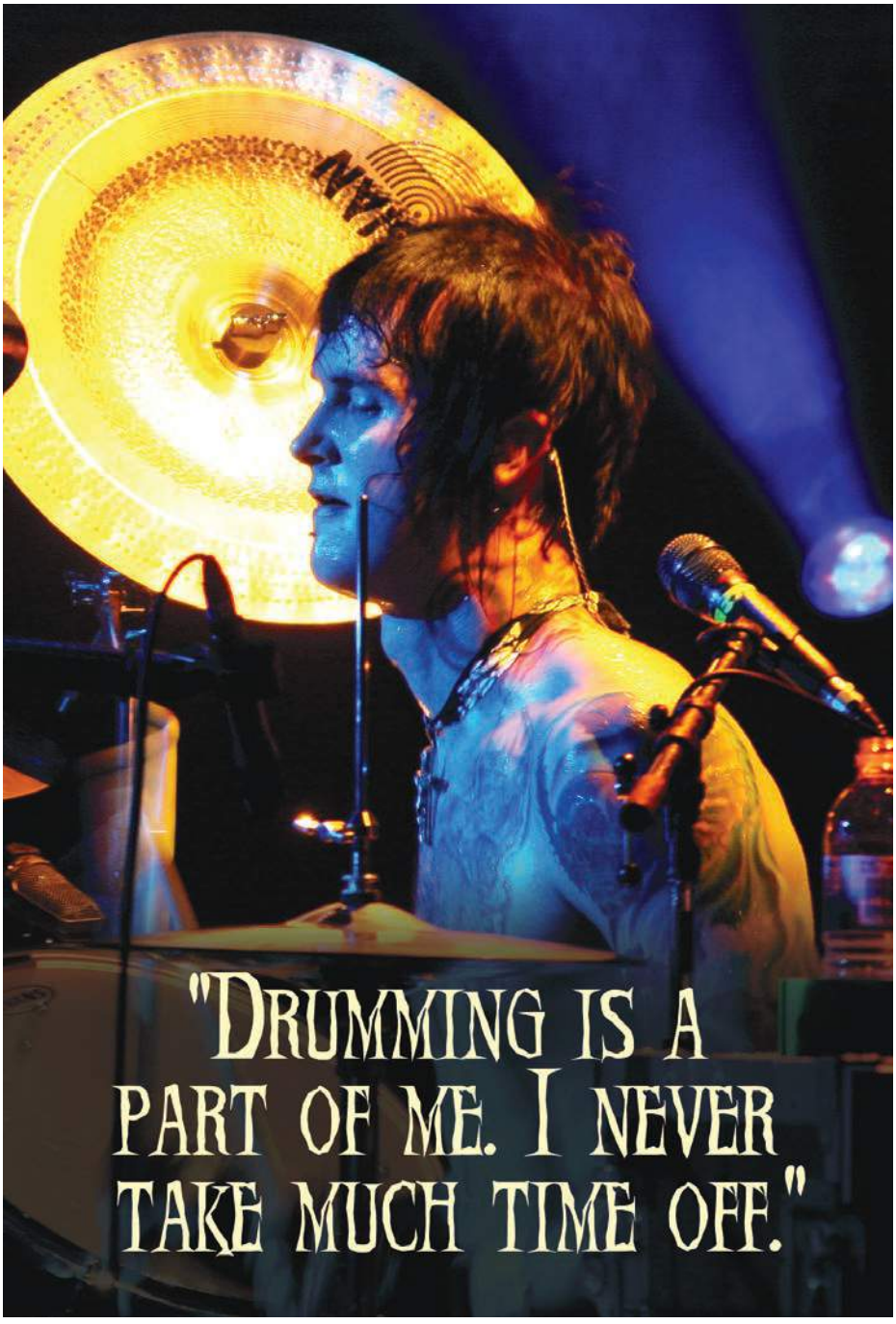
Rev: I remember working on that stuff for probably a few months. It started off with



listening to Paul Bostaph, Slayer's second drummer. He would do a lot of that kind of thing. And Terry Bozzio would do stuff that I couldn't believe. So I made a conscious effort to try and master those kinds of fills. Once you think you have it mastered, there are always new things you can do with your hands and feet in that sense. I'll put straight 16th notes underneath on the kicks when I'm playing straight 16th notes with my hands. It sounds powerful, and it makes people wonder what's going on, when it's actually really simple. But mostly it's going back and forth between my hands and feet. I love that.

MD: Sort of related to that is when you go to double time or divide the beat differently at fast tempos. A lot of drummers will rush or drag when bringing in a double-time double bass pattern. But you achieve evenness throughout, with both your velocity and your placement.

Rev: Thanks, man. The timing is really hard. I used to speed up every fill and every double bass part. I had to consciously work on that. I started off doing four strokes with my hands and two with my feet, and then four and four. I'd switch it



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American Hickory, TX5AX, Wood-tip

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TXR5B, "Natural", Wood-tip

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TXR747, "Natural", Wood-tip

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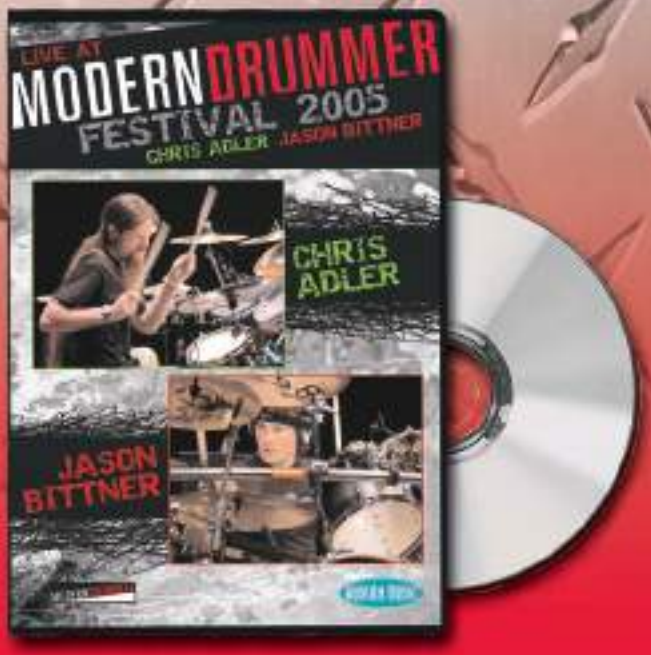

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up. Once I got that down, I'd move into triplets. And then three with my hands and one with my feet. Then two with the hands and five with the feet. That starts getting interesting. I'm gonna try to do more of that on the next record. Anything that's hard ends up sounding crazy, you know?

MD: Do you prefer two basses to a double pedal?

Rev: Once DW said I could have whatever kit I wanted, I started playing two kick drums. It's more fun. I thought it would be weird, but it wasn't. It was really comfortable.

MD: Before then you'd done most of your double bass work on a double pedal?

Rev: Right. The double pedal is actually much harder. With two kicks, both of them are your lead pedal, and it doesn't take that extra split second to translate. I mean, double pedals are great. Maybe it's a mental thing, but it just seems easier for me to play on two kicks.

MD: You've clearly spent a lot of time practicing. Do you still practice?

Rev: When I'm warming up is a good chance for me to practice. I can sit and tap with my feet and some sticks, and it's almost as good as playing on a kit. But just playing your set every night is the best practice ever. You elaborate and improvise a little bit when you're playing live, and that really turns into the best practice I get lately. Then at home, just thinking and tapping and messing around in your room, you come up with the best ideas. You formulate an idea in your head and *then* go practice it—that's when you can tackle really difficult stuff.

MD: You seem to have a style where if you went a week without playing, you would definitely notice it. Does that happen?

Rev: Yeah, totally. When you spend any time away you get a little rusty and your stamina goes down. The most I ever took off was four months in high school when I really didn't play at all, and it scared the hell out of me. I got back on the kit and I felt like I couldn't play anything. That's when I realized drumming is a part of me. So since then I've never taken much time off.

MD: You guys are notorious for your wild touring life. Is it hard to stay up for such a demanding show when you're on the road?

Rev: It is some nights. If you get a little wild the night before, it affects your playing and makes it a little bit harder. I like to take it easy the night before shows. We get a day off every three days, so you can cut loose a little bit on the days off. The first of three shows in a row is always the hardest, because your muscles tighten up on the day off. So as a drummer I actually like to do it every night. It's like when you're in the studio and you don't like to take breaks because you're not warm after the break. I get mad when the producer asks us to stop. [laughs]

Also, one of the hardest things is just cramping. It's really hard on your muscles. I do carpal tunnel exercises, just to make sure carpal tunnel doesn't get to me.

MD: Has it gotten to you in the past?

Rev: A little bit. Sometimes you get cramps, or problems that every drummer has when playing live.

MD: Have you experimented with finger technique to deal with that?

Rev: Not so much, just a couple stretches. I warm up to make sure I don't cramp up, and I pace myself during the set. That's pretty much it.

MD: Have you found your grip and technique evolving over the years?

Rev: Yeah, definitely. I've changed it up. I have two different grips for my right hand when we play live. When I ride on cymbals, I use the proper grip. Then I close up my grip a little bit more when I'm doing the harder fills. I also throw the stick between my fingers like Carmine Appice. I like to put on a show and twirl all the time, and I can actually do fills nowadays with the stick in between my fingers, which is weird. It's easy to get carried away with the live show, but I find it adds a lot more than it takes away.

MD: There's one more thing I have to ask: Is "The Rev" a distinct person from James?

Rev: I don't feel that way. That's just Avenged Sevenfold to me—that's who we are in this band. It's still a little crazy to introduce yourself as The Rev.

MD: You could call yourself Dr. Plague….

Rev: [laughs] I do that every now and then. My financé calls herself Mrs. Plague sometimes. Actually, I think she's gonna get that tattooed.

To hear The Rev with Avenged Sevenfold, go to MD Radio at www.moderndrummer.com.

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Remembering GARY CHESTER

THE NEW BREED AUTHOR WAS A STUDIO LEGEND AND AN INSPIRING TEACHER

BY RICK MATTINGLY

When people who studied with the late studio drummer Gary Chester encounter each other, the stories always start. A lot of them have to do with how Gary scared the hell out of them the first time they met him.

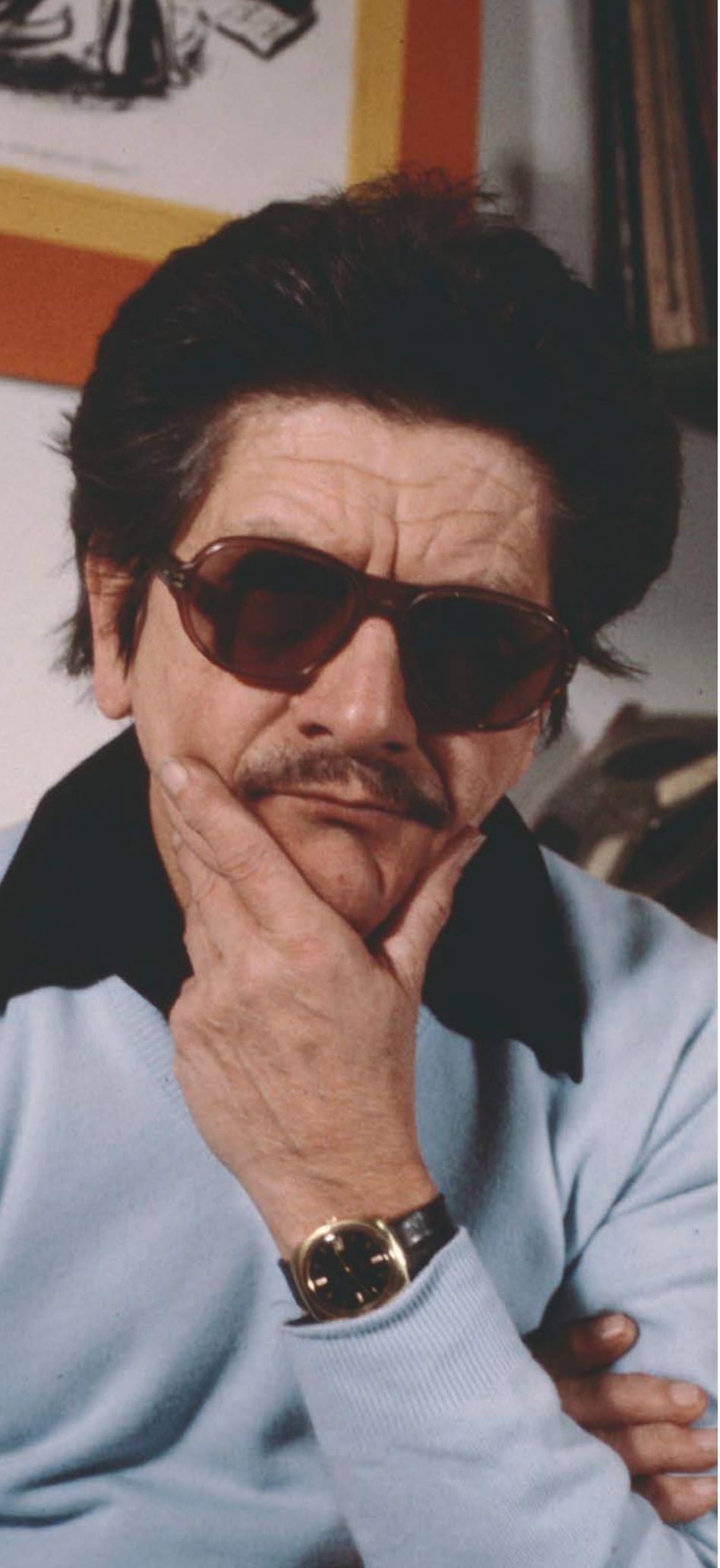
"At my first lesson," a former student told me once, "Gary had me sit down behind the drums and play along to a record. When the song ended Gary said, 'Your time's pretty good but your bass drum sucks.' Then he stood up and started taking off his belt. I was thinking, 'Oh my God, what's he going to do?' He came around behind me and strapped the belt around my shoulders so that my upper arms couldn't move, and then he said, 'Play.' So I played some more, and he said, 'See, you don't need to wave your arms around like that when you're playing.'"

Chris Adams also has vivid memories of her first lesson with Chester. "I walked in and he stood in front of me, sizing me up with that Charles Bronson look," she recalls. "Then he said, 'I don't really like girl drummers. They come in here, learn all my stuff, and then they want to go have babies.' Then he got right in front of me and said, 'Studying with me, you're not going to be here for a week or two; you need to be here for a year or more. But when you leave, you're going to have a quarter note in here that you'll never get rid of,' and he gently punched me in the stomach with his fist."

Kenny Aronoff also recalls his first meeting with Gary. "He looked like somebody out of *The Godfather*," Kenny recalls, laughing. "It was obvious he wasn't going to take any crap."

Indeed, if Chester felt that a student wasn't serious enough, he would tell the student to not come back. And woe be to a student who was late to a lesson or, even worse, called with some excuse to cancel. "If I knew for sure that the world was going to end at 2:00, and I had a session booked for 1:00, I'd be there," Gary would often tell such students.

Gary's youngest daughter, Katrina, remembers sometimes overhearing Gary verbally ripping a student to shreds. "Then I'd hear the student ask my dad if he could have a double lesson the following week," Katrina says. "From things I heard coming out of that room you would think that the students would be angry when they came out and never want to come back. But they never said anything bad about him. They would come out of there almost like they had just finished a yoga meditation class."



However intimidated students might have been on first encountering Chester, they soon learned that if they proved to Gary that they were serious about learning, they couldn't ask for a more loving, concerned teacher.

"Gary was a huge father figure to his students," says his wife, Jan. "He would talk to them about all phases of the music business and about what was going on in their lives. We had business cards made for him that said 'Gary Chester, Drum Guru.'"

Katrina says that many of the students became like family members. "They would stay and have dinner with us, help my father with his gardening, and sit on the porch talking to me and my sisters," she recalls. "Those are happy memories; it's like we had an extended family. He loved his students as much as they loved him."

Chester died in 1987, but his reputation has continued to grow as a result of his instructional book, *The New Breed*, which has sold over 60,000 copies since it was published in 1985. It is somewhat ironic that Chester is best known by many people as a teacher and drum book author, because during the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, he was one of the busiest studio drummers in New York, having done some 15,000 sessions. Turn on an "oldies" radio station and you'll probably hear him at least once an hour on such hits as "Twist And Shout" by the Isley Brothers, "I'm A Believer" by the Monkees, "Locomotion" by Little Eva, "He's So Fine" by the Chiffons, "Downtown" by Petula Clark, "What The World Needs Now" by Jackie DeShannon, "Under The Boardwalk" by the Drifters, "It's My Party" by Leslie Gore, "Bad, Bad Leroy Brown" by Jim Croce, and countless other hits by such artists as Bobby Darin, Dionne Warwick, Aretha Franklin, Little Anthony & The Imperials, The Lovin' Spoonful, Manhattan Transfer, Tiny Tim, Laura Nyro, Gene Pitney, Neil Sedaka, The Shirelles, Simon & Garfunkel, and many more.

But even at his busiest, very few people outside the New York studios knew his name, because studio players in those days were seldom credited. In fact, after *MD* ran a feature interview with Chester in 1983, a very well-known jazz drummer called me up (I was an *MD* editor at the time) and suggested that we had been duped. "How could this guy have done all that stuff and no one has ever heard of him?" the drummer demanded. A couple of days later, however, that same drummer called me back. "I owe you an apology," he said, meekly. "Last night I played a gig with [jazz

"IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO PLAY WELL; YOU'VE GOT TO GO IN GIVING THE MAN MORE THAN HE'S PAYING YOU FOR."—GARY CHESTER

vibraphonist and studio musician] Mike Mainieri, and I asked him if he had ever heard of Gary Chester. Mainieri looked at me like I was a moron and said, 'Gary Chester is a legend in the studios.'"

On The Road And In The Studio

Gary Chester (real name, Cesario Gurciullo) was born in 1924. His parents were from Saracusa, Italy, and Gary was the youngest of four children. While growing up in the New York City neighborhood of Harlem, he would stand outside the local clubs and listen to jazz bands. He would constantly bang on cans and boxes in the back of his father's barbershop, imitating the drummers he heard. He won the Gene Krupa Drum Contest in 1938 when he was fourteen, and subsequently quit school and went on the road, spending about a dozen years touring with big bands.

Being literally the "new kid," he was made to sit in the back of the bus. One day, while Gary was sound asleep, the bus stopped so the musicians could get some food. Gary remained asleep. When the bus started back up with a sudden jerk, the back door of the bus flew open and Gary fell out. The bus kept going, with no one realizing that Gary was gone. He started hitchhiking, and finally caught up with the band a couple of weeks later in a club, where a new drummer was playing Gary's drums. "I was screaming at the bandleader to give me my drums back," Gary recalled, "and he was screaming that I had abandoned them."

After several years on the road, Chester settled in New York, doing club dates and occasional studio dates. He was strictly a jazz drummer at that point, and for a while he shared an apartment with legendary jazz drummer Dave Tough. "We used to play brushes all night on a cardboard box," Gary recalled in his 1983 *MD* interview. "What grooves we used to get!"

Gary's big break as a studio drummer came when he was hired to play percussion for a session on which Panama Francis was playing drums. "At that time," Gary recalled, "Panama was the king of rhythm & blues and probably the king of rock 'n' roll. He had to leave at 5:00 for another date, so Mike Leiber and Jerry Stoller, who were the producers, asked me if I would play drums. Up until that point I had hardly listened to rock. The date was for LaVerne Baker and the song was 'Saved,' a Gospel tune that became a hit. Next thing, I was recording with people like The Drifters and Ben E. King. Everybody wants a winner; that's how I got to be in demand."

Chester worked constantly. "Gary would leave the house early in the morning," his wife recalls. "He would do three sessions a day: 10:00 to 1:00, 2:00 to 5:00, and 7:00 to 10:00. He'd get home about 11:30 at night. He did that every day, five days a week."

One reason Chester became so busy so fast was that he was willing to play rock 'n' roll. A lot of his jazz colleagues accused him of selling out.

He was also willing to try new things. After LaVerne Baker broke a tambourine head in the studio one day, Chester sat the headless instrument on top of his hi-hat cymbals so he got a jingly tambourine sound when he played the hi-hat. When he needed a more controlled maraca sound, he took an ashtray that was mounted on a bag with pebbles in it. He put metal thimbles on his index fingers and played on the pebble-filled bag with the thimbles. And for a Laura Nyro session where she wanted the sound of breaking glass, he bought a large pane of glass and took an engineer and a microphone to the roof of the studio so the engineer could record him breaking the glass.

(Presumably he got it in one take!)

Gary prided himself on his professionalism. "We were never late," he explained. "We always did the job the best we could. That's the whole thing in the business. It's not enough to play well; you've got to go in giving the man more than he's paying you for."

Danny Gottlieb, who studied with Chester in the early 1980s, has met and worked with several musicians who used to be on sessions with Gary. "Everybody says his time was unbelievable," Danny says.

In the mid-'70s, Chester retired from studio work and devoted himself to teaching. "He said he didn't want to be like some guys who kept playing past their prime," Jan Chester remembers. "Gary wanted to stop while he was still playing well."

Chester also didn't like some of the things that were starting to go on in the studios. "Years ago, we never had to raise our foot to play the bass drum," he explained. "I never played with my heel up; I always played with my foot flat because the engineers had ears. I played loud enough that the engineer could get a clear shot at me, but not to the point where I was distorting my sound. But these kids today come into the studio with Mack trucks full of amps. When they play a note the whole building shakes. You can't fight that.

"One of the last sessions I did was a jingle for Miller beer. The engineer immediately put my drums through a limiter, which cut my sound way down. After about five minutes of that I called the engineer over and said, 'What are you trying to do to me? Why do I have to bang so loud?' He said he wanted to get a good kick back. I told him he could get that later in the mix. 'You're not going to break *my* legs, buster!' That's when I realized that times were changing."

Kicking Ass

Once Chester started teaching, he maintained a similar schedule to the one he had kept in the studios. "He usually started at 10:00 in the morning, but sometimes he would squeeze one in at 9:00," Jan Chester remembers. He would go until 8:00 or 9:00 at night. I'd bring him lunch while he was teaching, and he would have coffee—and cigarettes!"

One of Chester's earliest students was Kenny Aronoff, who had graduated from Indiana University in 1976 with a degree in percussion and then moved to New York. "I was making a big change, going from studying classical percussion with people like Vic Firth, George Gaber, and Arthur Press to taking on drumset," Kenny explained. "I was studying with Gary and also going to Boston to study with Alan Dawson. It was scary because I was redirecting my commitment to what I was going to do in life.

"Gary really challenged me," Kenny said. "*The New Breed* wasn't out yet, but he was developing the exercises that became that book. I remember him trying to get me to play 16th notes with my right foot. At that point, my technique was slamming the beater into the head, which you can't do very fast. So I couldn't do that very fast or for very long, and he wanted me to keep it going for five minutes. And then he wanted me to play 16th notes with

Revisiting The New Breed

Here are comments from former students, friends, and family of Gary Chester, discussing his classic book and the "lost interview" recording that's now available on CD with the new edition of the book.

"With Gary gone now twenty years, his life's work and legacy lives on through his numerous recordings and his teaching methods. His book, *The New Breed,* has spawned, as he envisioned, a new group of drummers who have amazing dexterity, musicality, and control, and the book itself has become one of the most widely used drum texts in history. There are so few recordings and documents from his lessons that exist. I am so thrilled that we have this recording, with Gary going through his concepts, inspiring us all, in his own words." **Danny Gottlieb**

"Gary Chester was my teacher. He taught me some unique exercises that helped me improve as a drummer very quickly. I still use those exercises today. Those exercises became part of his drum book, *The New Breed.* An amazing book, an amazing teacher, and an amazing person. **Kenny Aronoff**

"Hearing Gary's voice on this CD brings back warm memories of the times I spent with him while editing *The New Breed.* The information he imparts is valuable and helps put the exercises into perspective. But more than that, it's the absolute conviction and passion in Gary's voice that lets you know this guy knew what he was talking about and is giving it to you straight." **Rick Mattingly**

"Thankfully, we drummers can be grateful and happy that there's a recording of Gary speaking about the *New Breed* system. Certainly, the dynamic of hearing the author speak makes the system very real and very right for anyone not afraid to grow and to live with passion." **Mike Mangini**

"Just as Gary showed us to use the voice as another instrument in his unique spin on drumming independence, this audio disc really amplifies his teachings and theories by bringing *his* own voice to *The New Breed.* It's a brief look at the man, who, apart from having a staggering list of timeless hits to his credit, brought forth a new way to approach the drums and appreciate music." **Tommy Stewart**

"*The New Breed* is a timeless masterpiece. Thank you, Gary, for inspiring *Extreme Interdependence*!" **Marco Minnemann**

"I'm not much different from *New Breed* students, in that growing up with Gary as my father was a constant learning process, both as a daughter learning lessons about life *and* as a student of music. I've always known what I wanted to do with my life, and my father, in his own way, was preparing me, even at age five when he had me sing my first jingle. 'Eat, sleep, and shit music,' was what he said to me, which at age five was a little…'WHAT?'

"When Danny Gottlieb called to tell me he had this 'lost interview' with my dad, I can't begin to tell you how excited I was. Hearing my father's voice again was beautiful, and the things he said just floored me. Now that I make my living as a musician, I often ask myself, 'What would Dad say or think?' So many of those moments are captured on this interview, and it's the proof to me that the *New Breed* system is timeless. The interview was recorded twenty years ago, and my dad's words all still ring true!

"Thank you, Danny, for finding this interview. Thanks also to my father and teacher; it's great to meet you again. And finally, thanks to *Modern Drummer* for always remaining a huge supporter of my dad and his teachings.

"Time is all that matters." **Katrina Chester**

my right foot *and* my right hand, and then he wanted me to do the same thing with my left hand. You'd think that would be easy; it wasn't. He'd laugh at me as he turned the click track down slower and slower and slower until I got to my comfort level. Then he'd have me play 16ths with both hands together, and then start adding accents on the quarter-note pulse. They had to be even, with no flamming. I hadn't even played a beat yet!

"At that age, I couldn't appreciate where this was all going. I just wanted him to show me some licks and tell me how to get a gig. Once I committed to studying with somebody, I never questioned it; I just did it. But this was a new system. It wasn't about beats and fills; it was about coordination. At that point, I just had to trust the guy. Now I totally get it.

"One of the best things Gary did for me was to inspire me to play with left-hand lead," Aronoff says. "A few years later, I was in the middle of recording *American Fool* with John Mellencamp. The first single off that album was 'Hurts So Good.' When John first played the song for us, I started playing a simple beat with left-hand lead. And John said, 'That's a cool beat, man. Why haven't you ever played that before?' I was laughing to myself because it was a beat I played a lot, but always with right-hand lead. When I played it left-handed, the feel was different. I realized that I could have two different personalities. So I recorded the song left-handed, doing simple tom fills with my right hand while I kept the hi-hat going at all times. Then, on tour, I played half the show with left-hand lead.

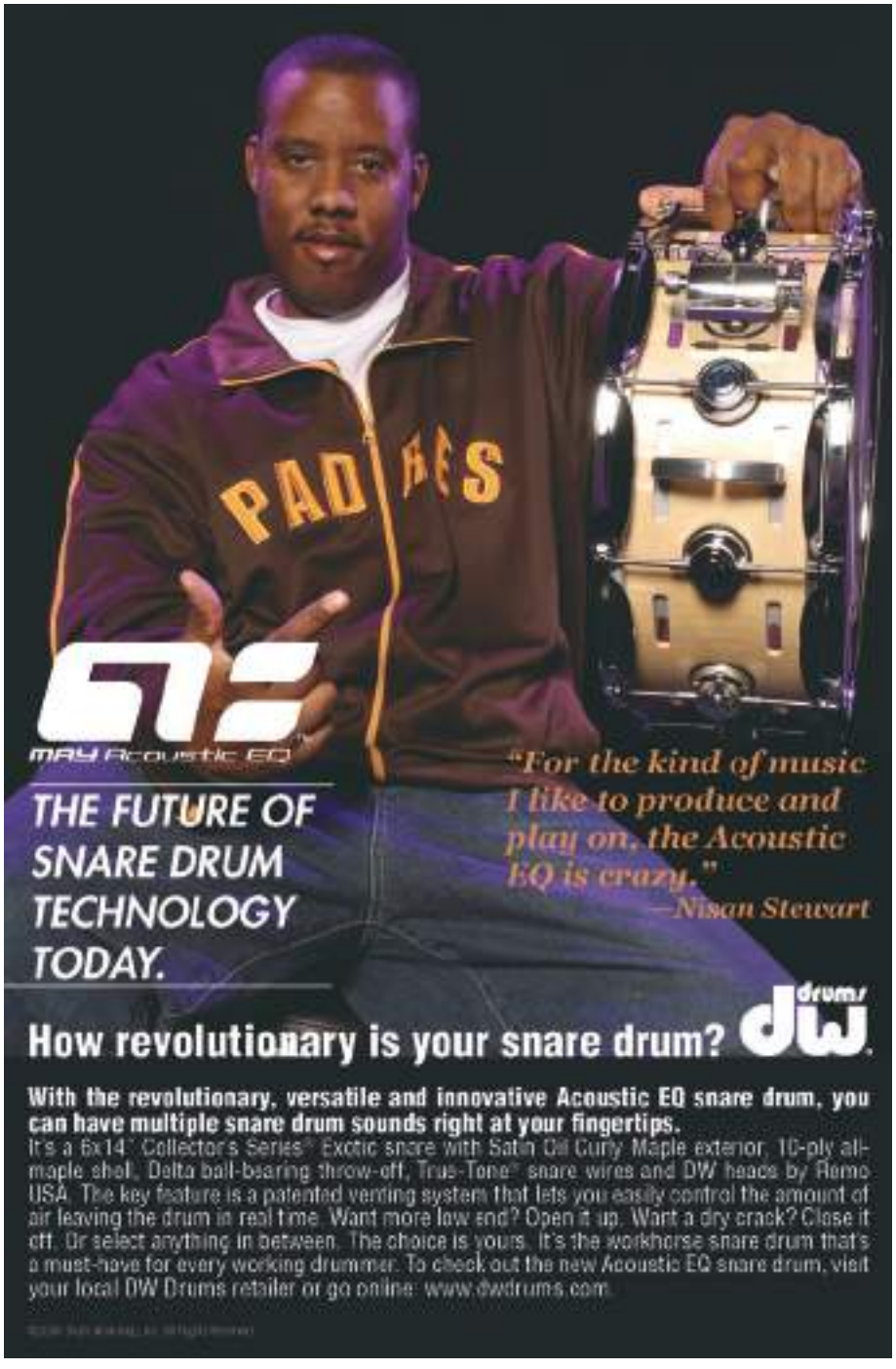
"I wrote Gary a letter when the song went to number-one, thanking him for turning me on to playing with left-hand lead. That's what you want when you study with someone—something you can apply. And it really worked."

Dave Weckl was another student who came to Chester shortly before his own career took off. "Twenty-something years later, I still have profound visions of my time spent with Gary," says Dave. "I remember my thoughts when I decided to study with him. I was about twenty-one, feeling pretty cocky about my abilities. I *was* pretty good, actually, for my age. I had spent countless years copying the likes of Buddy Rich, Billy Cobham, and Steve Gadd, to mention a few. I felt I was *ready*.

"So I went to the lesson with the mindset of, Well, if this guy can't show me anything, since he was a big studio guy, I'll just ask him to help me get some work in the New York studios. Within the first ten minutes my ass was kicked so hard from the exercises Gary was throwing at me—which I couldn't *do*—I felt like a beginner. I left the first lesson with my tail between my legs, a bit down, but excited at the same time that someone was really going to teach me something new—new energy, new abilities, new inspiration!"

At the time, Weckl was living above an abandoned pizzeria in Pelham, New York. His drums were set up in the living room, stuffed with towels to keep the noise down so he could practice without bothering the neighbors. "The wall to my right became a dartboard of sorts, where I would heave sticks out of frustration trying to do Gary's exercises," Dave remembers. "I had *never* been challenged so much. I spent about a year and a half with Gary. His methods weren't published yet, but he used me and others to help formulate his now famous book, *The New Breed*.

"To this day, I apply the skills I developed through Gary's studies all the time.



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Gary Chester

He systematically, yet subconsciously, taught the student how to concentrate. He understood the concept of developing one's 'tools of ability.' For me, it wasn't that I used his exact systems. But the abilities I gained in terms of coordination and focusing on the internal aspects of my playing served as the foundation for solid time, even subdivisions, and the ability to be complex, if desired, from a coordination standpoint. His teachings and, of course, my countless hours of practice and playing, set the real groundwork for the beginning of my career as a successful drummer in a very difficult business.

"Two months after I left Gary I got a gig with some of the finest musicians in New York—a band called French Toast. Less than a year after that, I was on the reunion tour with Simon & Garfunkel. The rest, as they say, is history. All those holes in the wall above the pizzeria paid off!"

Danny Gottlieb heard Weckl with French Toast and was knocked out by what Dave was playing. "I asked Dave what he was practicing to get that kind of independence happening with the bass drum, and he told me about Gary Chester," Danny remembers. "I had never heard of him, but I went to see him."

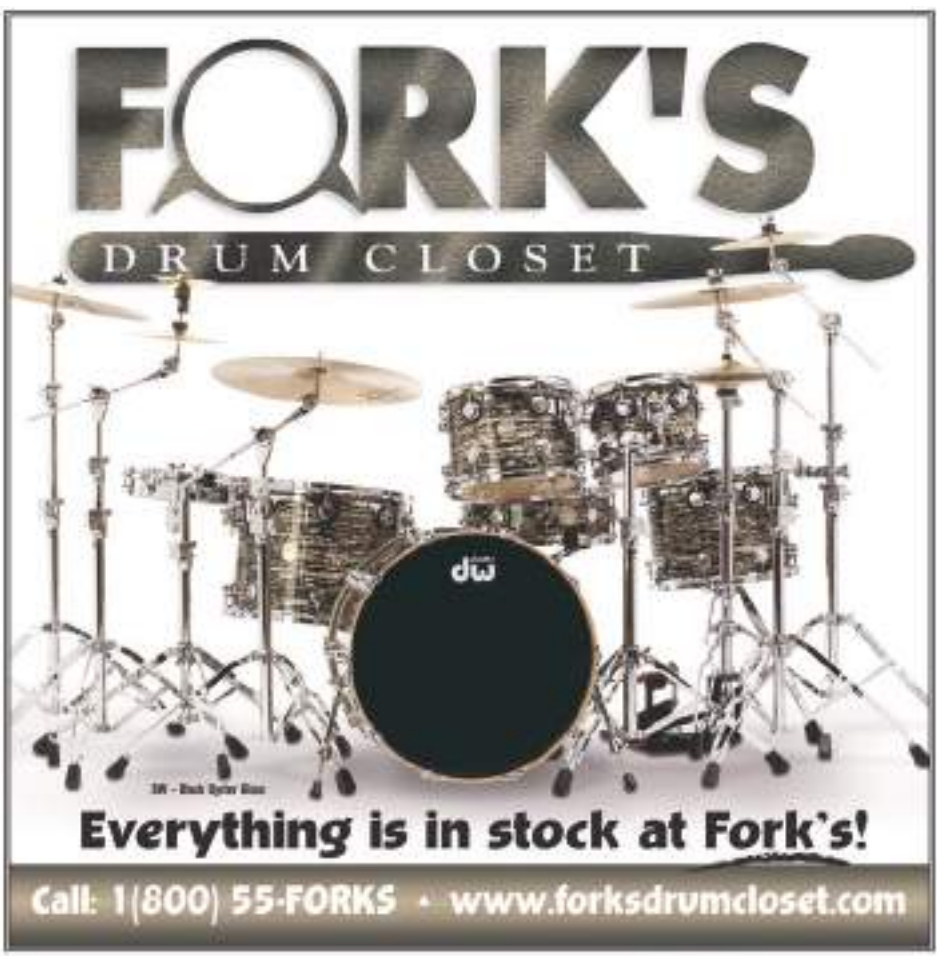
Gottlieb had just finished several years with The Pat Metheny Group. "Gary listened to some of the Metheny records I was on and said, 'We've got a lot of work to do,'" Danny recalls, laughing. "He felt I needed more grounding in the groove department, and he was absolutely right.

"The greatest thing about playing those exercises for Gary was that it was like being on a record date with a producer scrutinizing everything I was doing: 'The hi-hat is too loud. You're playing too on top…you're not in the center of the click…your bass drum is inconsistent….' If you played something that sounded mediocre, he would let you know. He was a teacher you really wanted to impress. You had a heavyweight listening to you, and you really wanted to surpass anything you had done previously."

The New Breed

Gottlieb, who had helped Joe Morello and Bob Moses hook up with *Modern Drummer*'s new book publishing division, resulting in Morello's *Master Studies* and Moses's *Drum Wisdom* books, encouraged Gary to contact *MD* and discuss doing a book. "At that time, Gary had his systems mapped out, but they weren't organized," Danny explains. "For the reading exercises he was using Ralph Pace's book, *Variations Of Drumming*. I told Gary he should put his stuff in a book, and he said he would love to, but he didn't know how to write a book. So I told him I could record him talking about his systems and ideas and then transcribe the tape, and he could use that as a basis for organizing his thoughts."

Chester subsequently asked Chris Adams to notate the systems and create a new set of reading exercises based on the way the Pace book was organized: groups of ones, groups of twos, and groups of threes. "As a gentleman and as a business courtesy, Gary



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wrote to Ralph Pace and told him that he liked the way his rhythm reading exercises were organized, and Gary got Pace's okay to model his exercises after those in *Variations*," Chris Adams remembers. "Gary didn't steal any of Pace's music, he just imitated the way it was organized."

When Chester eventually met with the *Modern Drummer* editors, the first page of the Reading exercises consisted of the material that, in the final book, appeared as "Reading III-A." It was suggested that he write some simpler, "entry level" exercises for the benefit of students who didn't have the opportunity to study with him personally. At first, Chester resisted the idea, but ultimately asked Adams to create the pages that now comprise Reading I and Reading II.

The name "New Breed" was chosen to reflect Gary's feeling that his systems would prepare drummers for the new challenges they were facing in recording studios. "Gary wasn't just teaching you to play the stuff he had played in the studio," Danny Gottlieb explains. "He wanted his students to go to the next level. He wanted you to be able to sight-read any drum part a computer could spit out, which a lot of drummers today can do, thanks to that book."

Given Gary's background as a studio drummer, it seemed logical that the front cover should reflect a studio setting. Gary brought in his own drumset, including the new cymbals he had just received from Paiste: red Colorsound models. (They were also available in black, blue, and green. Colored cymbals lasted about as long as New Coke.)

And since this was going to be the drum book of the future, it was agreed that the setup should include some of the new electronic pads that were going to revolutionize drumming. So *Modern Drummer* publisher Ron Spagnardi contributed the two Simmons pads that are visible in the photo. (The fact that those pads had been stored away in Ron's closet for several months should have told us something, but didn't.)

Okay, so the cover was seriously dated within a year after the book came out. Fortunately, people paid attention to the old adage and didn't judge the book by its cover. Gary's systems, however, having been developed over a long period of time and based on his professional experience, proved to be timeless.

"My dad already had a full schedule of students before the book came out," Katrina says, recalling that he would teach over fifty students a week. "But after *New Breed* was published, his waiting list got really long. And then he started giving lessons on cassettes to students in other countries."

Numerous drummers who never had the chance to study with Gary have benefited from him through *The New Breed*. Glenn Kotche of Wilco says the book helped his coordination tremendously. He also used the Reading sections the way many people use Ted Reed's *Syncopation* book, going beyond the written exercises. "One of my favorite things is to play the Reading pages in half-time along with a samba groove," Glenn says.

Marco Minnemann credits *The New Breed* with forming his style of playing drums. "It has opened doors for the drumming community to take the instrument to a whole new level," Marco says. "It's a timeless masterpiece."

A couple of months before his death, Chester began working with Chris Adams on plans for *The New Breed II*, which would include material he used with advanced students, including "bonus" systems, triplets, and odd times. Even though Gary passed away before the book was completed, Adams was able to run all the material by him before he died, and she subsequently finished it.

Last year, while sorting through some old tapes, Danny Gottlieb discovered the recording he had made of Chester talking about his concepts and philosophies. *Modern Drummer* is now releasing a new edition of *The New Breed* that includes a CD containing that interview.

"Hearing Gary discuss his studio experience and map out steps for the next generation is a great gift to us all," says Chris Adams. "Danny prompts Gary to talk about the importance of time, feel, knowledge of numerous styles, reading, listening, drumset independence, and the value of relating to every part being played. Gary has come back to inspire us once again!"

For more info on **Gary Chester**, please go to www.gary-chester.com.

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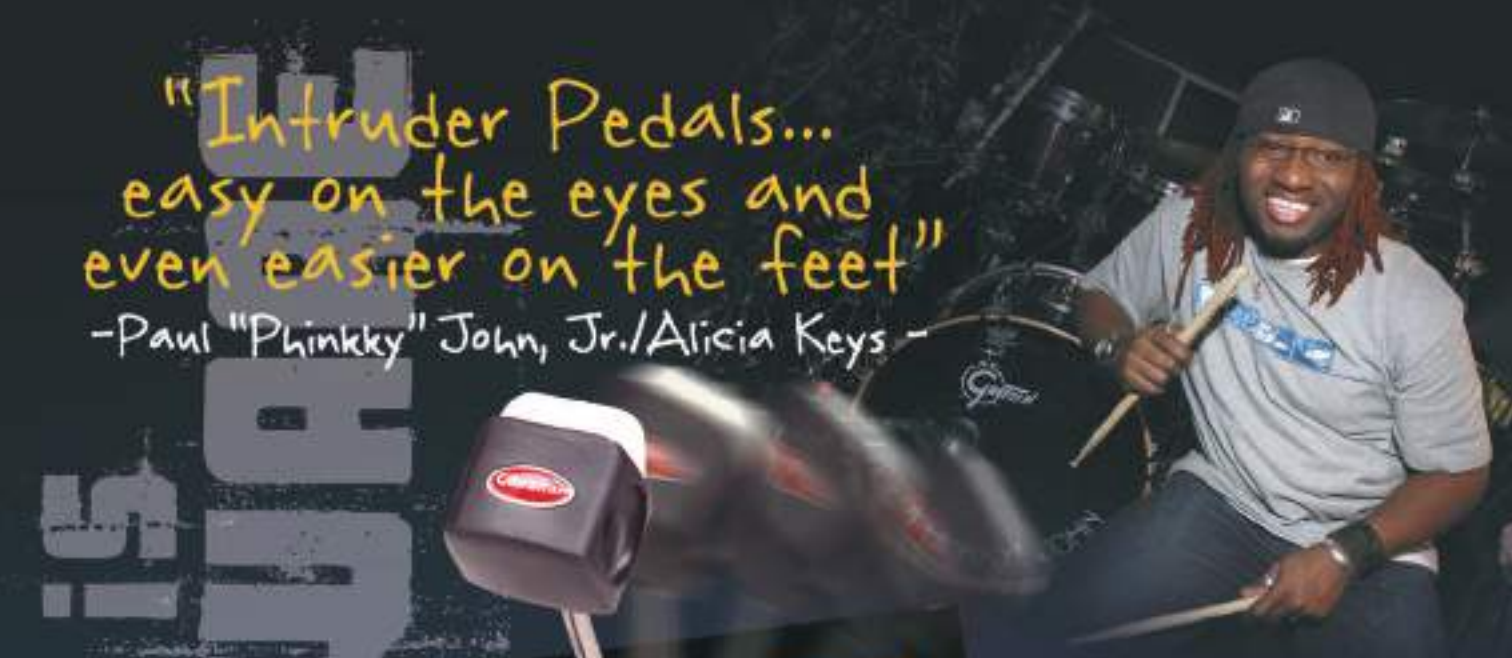

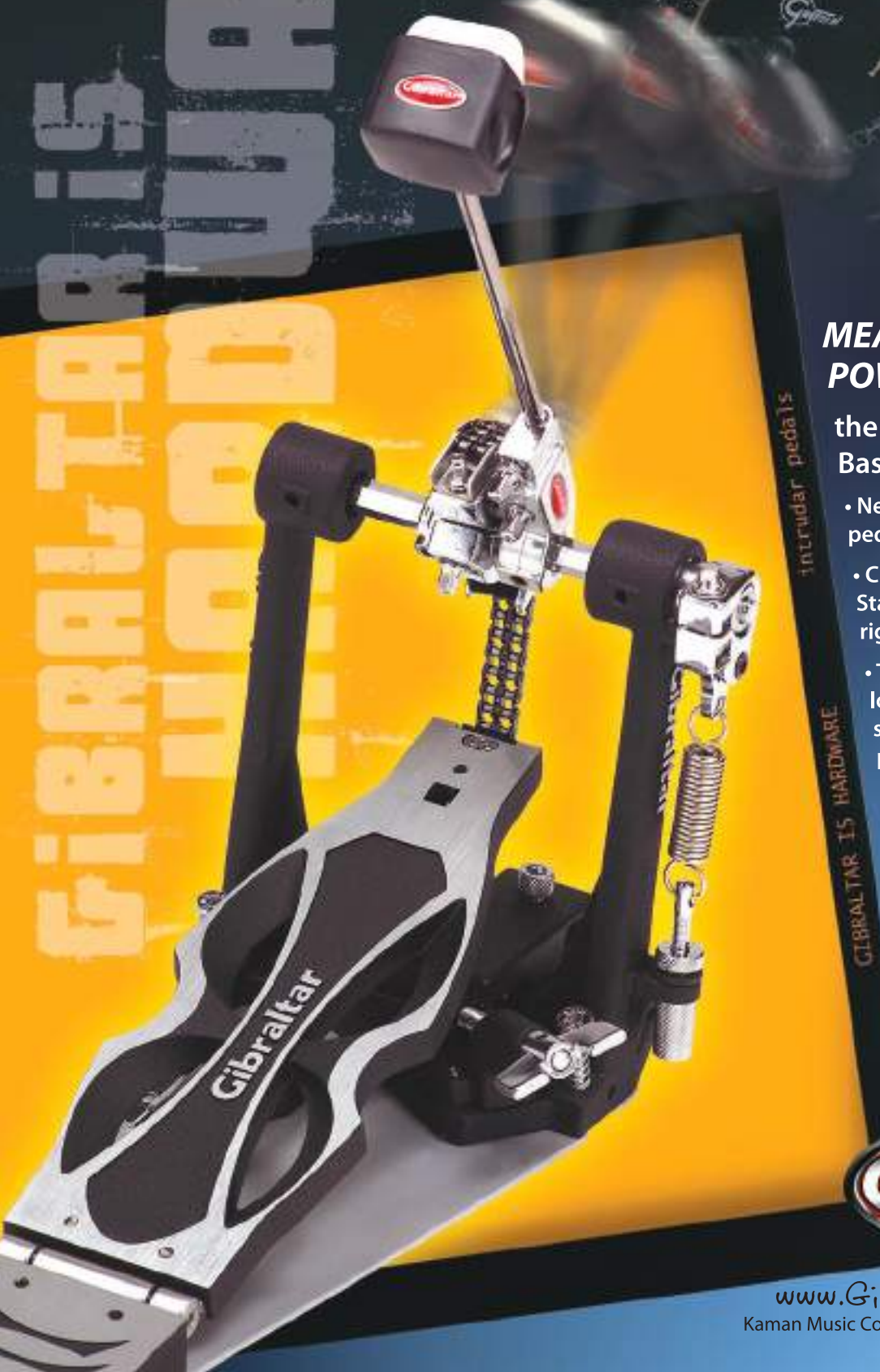

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Dave Weckl
Inside Dave's Garage

story and photos by Mike Haid

The Chumash Indians were the first settlers to explore the area of Southern California's San Fernando Valley now known as Woodland Hills. Today, tucked away in the sprawling suburbs of Woodland Hills lives one of the great explorers of modern drumming, Dave Weckl. Dave settled here several years ago, making his home in a quiet neighborhood with his wife, Ninoska.

Besides being an international drumming superstar, Dave has been involved in audio engineering for several years. In order to fulfill his recording and rehearsal needs, his drum practice space needs to accommodate a recording studio, all in a reconstructed portion of his two-car garage. Weckl has mixed several of his own projects in the space he appropriately dubbed The Garage, including his album *Perpetual Motion*, live Dave Weckl Band recordings, and both of Horacio "El Negro" Hernandez' Italuba group recordings. Dave also completely recorded and mixed his group's latest release, *Multiplicity*, here. "I don't like having to get in my car and drive to be able to practice, record, or teach," states Weckl. "I prefer walking out my back door and getting right to work, at any time of the day or night."

With the help of Dave's live sound engineer, Dennis Moody, the fusion drumming pioneer designed and constructed the totally isolated room with

Left: Dave utilizes his Yamaha keyboard rig to compose. Center: A Yamaha Hipgig kit fitted with Dave's signature-series Sabian Legacy cymbals comes in handy for teaching. And right: Dave tracks his recordings from behind the kit via an auxilliary monitor.

floating floor, high ceiling, and sufficient sound insulation. "I didn't want to get too elaborate in the construction process," says Weckl, "since I don't plan on this becoming my permanent residence."

Weckl explains that when he was house-hunting, his main objective was to find a place with a detached garage, away from the street, that would suit his music-making needs without bothering the neighbors. "If I know I'm bothering someone," he shares, "I become easily distracted and can't focus as well as I need to." Dave adds that his eight-year-old daughter visits frequently, and usually wakes up early, so he adjusts his schedule to rise early and practice during the daytime hours.

Since Weckl engineers his drum tracks from a remote unit behind the drumkit, which is connected to his main recording rig on the other side of the room, there's no need for a separate control room. Aside from one small isolation booth, the studio is one big open room with one door and one window looking out over a swimming pool in the backyard.

Dave tells us that the room was built a month after he bought the house. "I was starting to record my *Perpetual Motion* CD at the time," he recalls, "so we had to get the room built immediately." With all of his hi-tech recording gear and expensive drum equipment in the room, the drummer insists that the most important piece of gear is the air conditioning unit. "It's crucial to have good ventilation when you're spending hours in a room full of recording gear that's emitting heat, not to mention being able to cool off a sweaty drummer."

Dave records "in the box" on a hard-disk system using a Mac G5, Pro Tools, and a Control 24 front-end board. "I like using the Control 24 board instead of the mouse," he remarks, "because of the strain on my wrist from handling the mouse for hours at a time." Dave goes on to say that he uses Grace mic preamps for the drums and Universal Audio tube pre's for the crucial overhead mics. "Since most of the drum sounds come from the overheads," he explains, "I needed top-quality mic pre's to capture a clean representation of the kit. I always start my mix with the overheads. Then I bring in the kick drum, and then the snare." Dave adds that he uses Yamaha NS-10 and NSP-10 monitor speakers for mixing, but does most of his tracking with Shure in-ear monitors.

Besides his own project, Weckl uses The Garage to record drum tracks for artists all over the world. He says he enjoys this process because it allows him to record and mix the drum tracks to his liking, then ship his recorded tracks to the client without leaving home.

Weckl's main recording kit (which stays in The Garage) is the Yamaha Birch Custom Absolute kit heard on the last three Weckl Band studio recordings. He uses a combination of his Yamaha 13" and 14" signature-series maple snare drums, as well as his 14" aluminum signature snare drum. The only cymbals you'll find in The Garage are the Sabian Evolution HHX series and the new Sabian Legacy HHX series. Both lines were designed by Dave and Sabian to create a full spectrum of sounds for all playing situations. His Garage kit also includes a pair of mounted Remo Valencia series bongos, plus a mounted Remo Tombek. Dave insists he's not a collector of drums, and prefers to keep only what he needs on hand to get the job done, including a Yamaha Hipgig kit that he uses mostly for teaching.

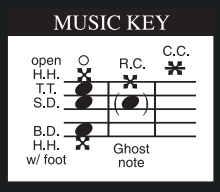
When coming off a long tour, Weckl says that he gives his body a well-needed rest before doing any type of practice. If he's home for a short time, he'll do "maintenance" practice to keep up his road chops. If he's off the road for a while, he'll spend more time experimenting with new drum techniques and kit-positioning ideas.

"I feel it's important that every drummer who's serious about playing drums has a place to play and stretch out on an acoustic kit," Weckl concludes. "It's the only way to really grow and improve your skills as a player."

Dennis Chambers

Boston T Party

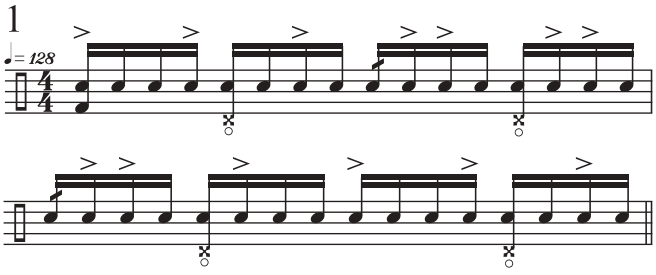
by Ed Breckenfeld



Heads up, fusion fans! Dennis Chambers has a new band featuring an all-star ensemble of experimental guitarist David Fiuczynski (Screaming Headless Torsos), keyboardist/producer T Lavitz (Dixie Dregs), and legendary bassist Jeff Berlin. Cooking up great funk grooves comes natural to Chambers, and this disc showcases that side of his playing while the rest of the band provides fiery solos on top. Along the way Dennis slips in some tasty licks to spice things up. Here are a few samples.

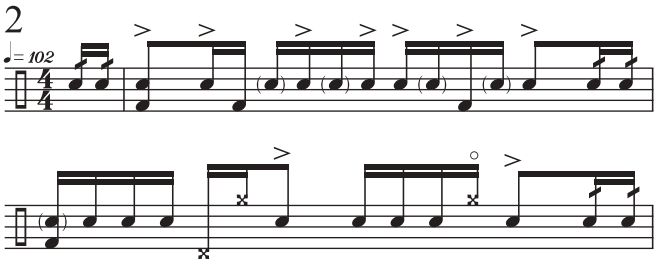
"D'funk'd"

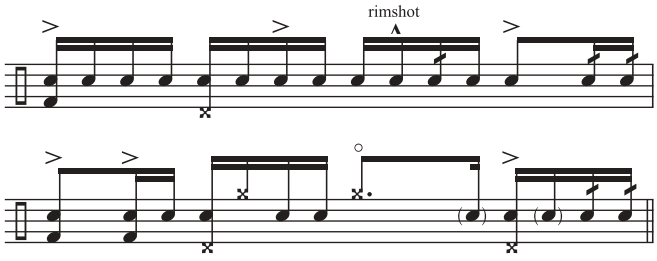
The album opens with a mid-tempo funk tune that Chambers underplays to focus the attention on his bandmates. Late in the track, the groove switches to a marching-style snare beat during which Dennis eases in some nice double strokes and accents over a splashing hi-hat pattern. (4:22)



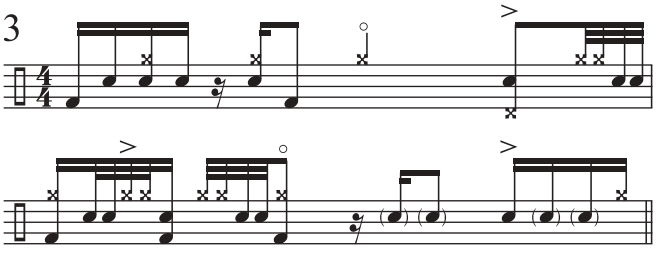
"(Great) Ball Of Issues"

This New Orleans–flavored cut starts with the following four-bar drum intro. Chambers' relaxed approach sets the tone for the track, as he flows through rolls and accents with the easy feel that the genre requires. Notice how well his kick and hi-hat placement augments the second-line snare groove. (0:00)



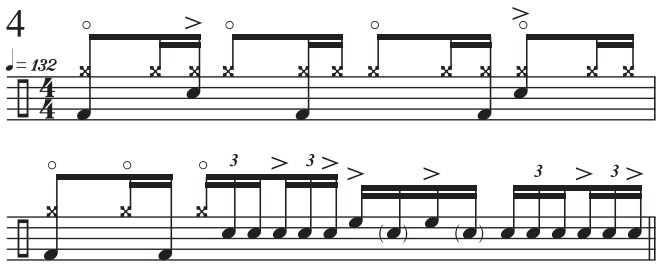


Several bars into the song, this five-stroke roll sequence alternating between hi-hat and snare (starting on the last beat of the first measure below) is a real attention grabber. (0:47)



"Around About Way"

On the album's uptempo third track, Dennis uses a charging open hi-hat pattern and some speedy fills to push things forward. (0:58)



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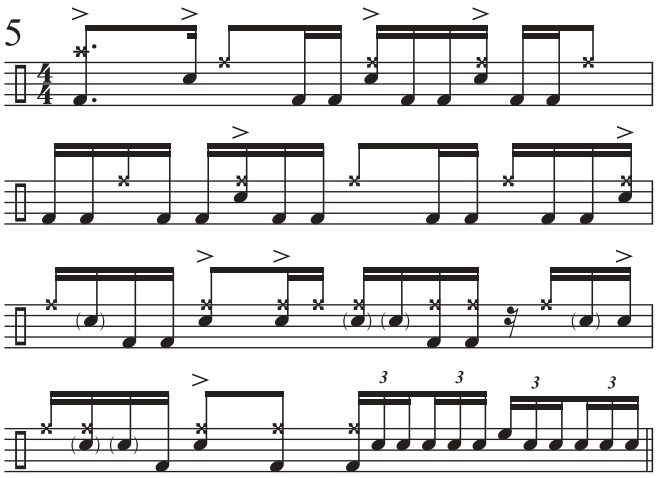
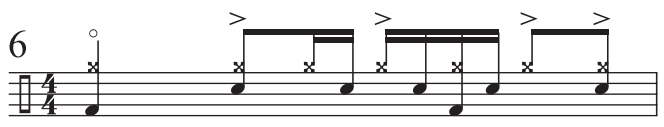
Dennis Chambers

Halfway into the tune, the bass and guitar drop out, leaving Chambers to support T Lavitz's extended keyboard solo. This quickly becomes more of a duet, as Dennis plays off of the rhythms in Lavitz's riffs. Look at the bass drum work in the first two measures of this four-bar section. (2:30)

Finally, the piece moves into a section featuring David Fiuczynski soloing over a James Brown–style groove. Dennis does a spot-on Clyde Stubblefield impersonation here. (3:29)



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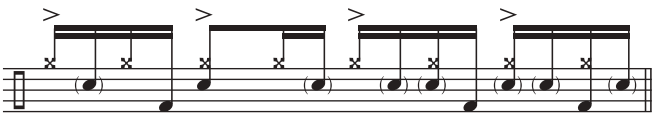
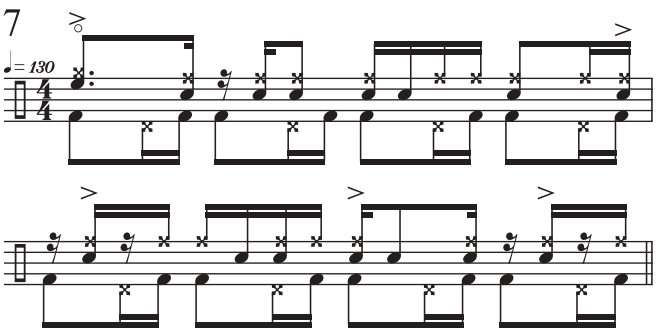
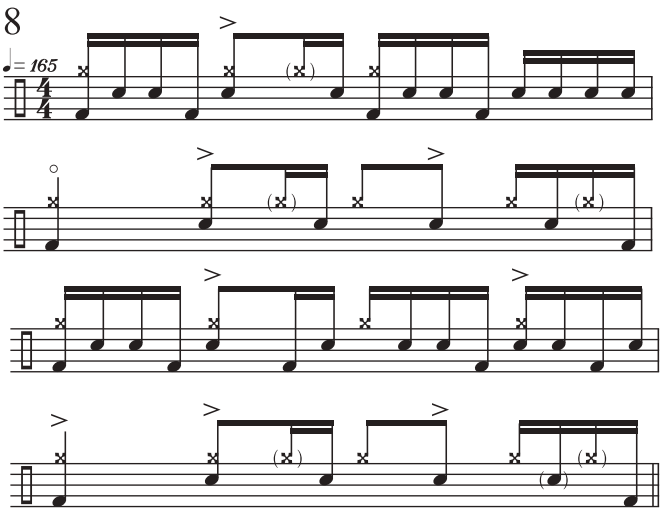


"All Thought Out"

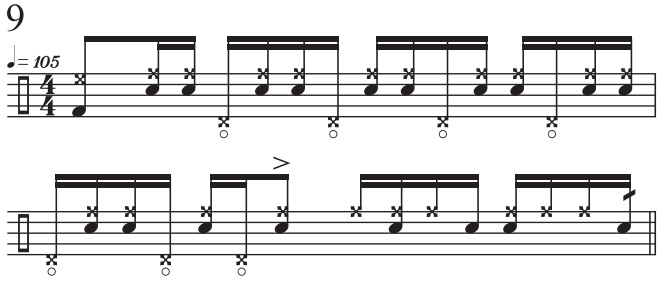
This tune starts out as a jazz ballad and then takes a left turn into a sweet samba groove. Check out the beautiful snare and cymbal interplay in this two-bar excerpt. (2:44)



"Deff 184"

This track segues out of another song via Jeff Berlin's frantic, funky bass line. The left-hand work in Chambers' accompanying beat is astounding at this speed. (0:00)

"Constant Comment"

Late in the album the groove turns jazzier, giving Dennis a chance to stretch out in a more free-flowing style. Here he alternates splashing hi-hats with snare/cymbal double strokes. (0:09)



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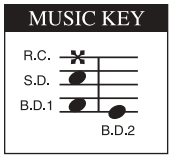
Double Bass Crash Course

Part 3: Shifting Gears

by Jason Bittner



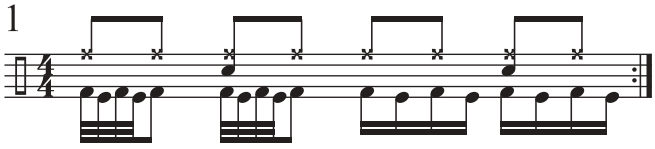
Over the past two months, we've covered 16th-note endurance patterns, triplet grooves, broken 16th-note figures, and 32nd-note ideas. This month we're concluding our double bass crash course with a few exercises that will help you get comfortable shifting between different subdivisions. To cap things off I've thrown in two cool bonus beats for you to explore, the gallop and the four-stroke ruff.

Basic Gear Shifts

The idea behind these examples is to learn how to shift comfortably between 8ths, 16ths, triplets, and 32nd notes. Start slowly at first, and make sure each note is evenly spaced.

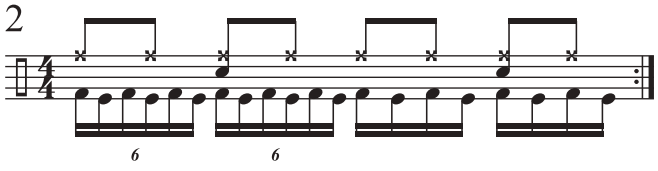
Example 1 shifts between 32nd notes and 16ths.

1



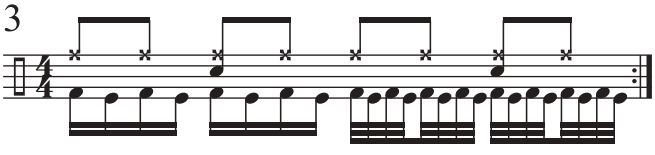
Now try jumping from 16th-note triplets to 16ths.

2



The next two examples move straight from 16ths to 32nds, so be on your toes.

3



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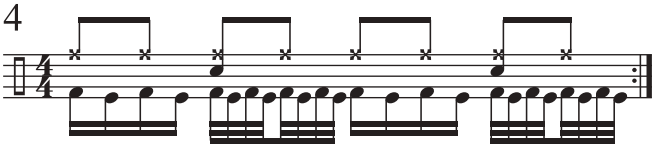
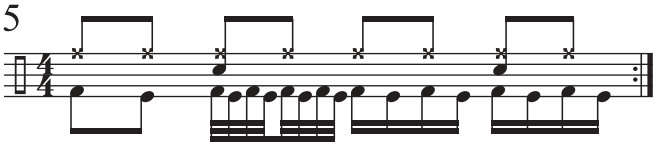


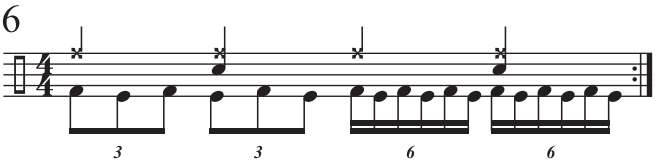
Now try shifting from 8ths, to 32nd notes, to 16ths.

5



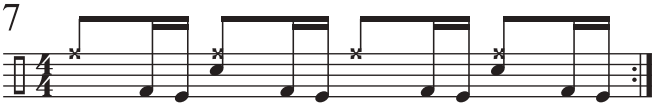
This last gear-shifting example is triplet-based, moving from 8th-note triplets to sextuplets. After you've tried out each of these examples, experiment and make up some of your own. You should also try different ride and snare patterns.

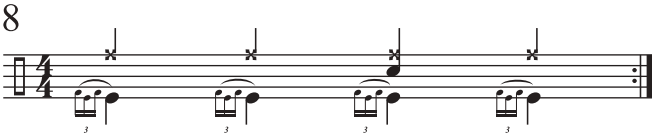
6



The Gallop And The Four-Stroke Ruff

The gallop is essentially an "& a" pattern without the downbeats being played on the kick. This groove is used primarily in fast metal, hardcore, and punk music. It sounds really cool at quick tempos. You can also use this beat in places where you may want constant double kicks, but don't have the endurance to do so. After you've worked it up to speed, try playing the snare on all four beats along with an 8th-note ride pattern.

7

Four-stroke ruffs are extremely fun to play. Check out drummers like Vinnie Paul (Pantera) and Charlie Benante (Anthrax) to experience this figure being played by some of the masters. Start slowly and maintain control. Speed comes with time. Also, try playing the snare on beats 2 and 4, or on all four beats. Experiment with different ride patterns as well.

8

Well, that concludes our three-month crash course in double bass. I hope you've found some of these exercises valuable and inspiring. Double bass drumming doesn't come easy. But once you get rolling, I'm sure you'll find a ton of cool ways to get your feet in on the action. Now, go practice!

Jason Bittner is the award-winning drummer with Shadows Fall.

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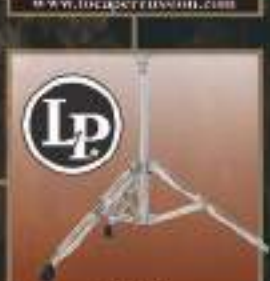

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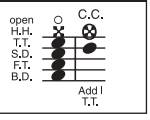
The Commodores'

Walter "Clyde" Orange

"Brick House"

by David Garibaldi

MUSIC KEY



There are classic songs, and then there are *classic* songs. The Commodores' "Brick House" is definitely the latter, and is one of the great R&B songs of all time.

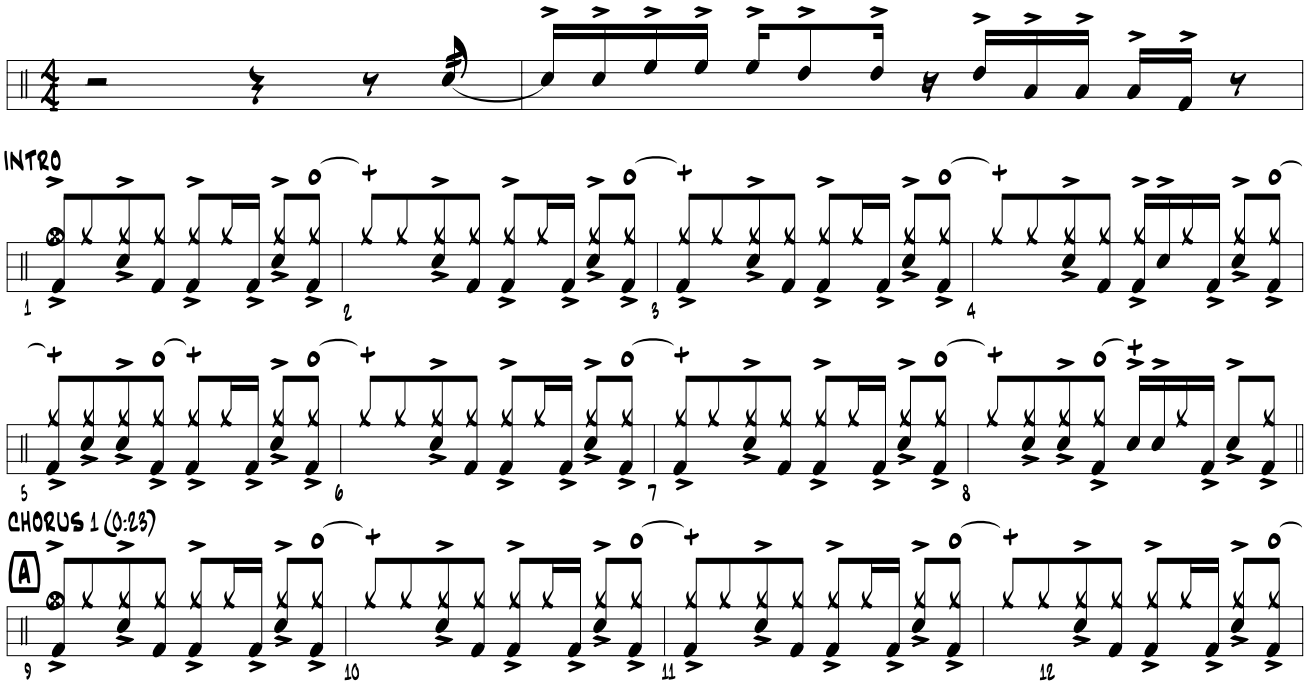
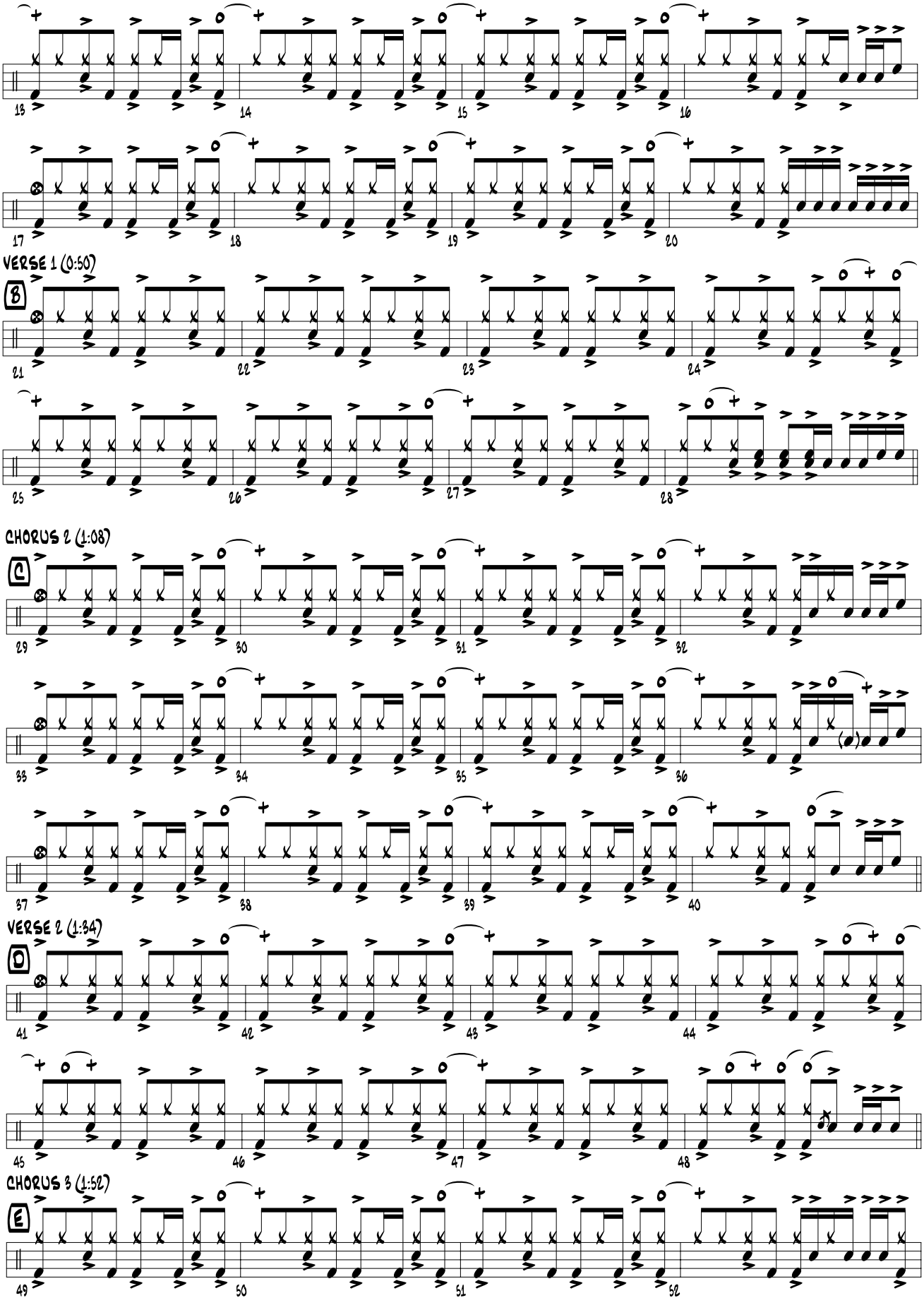
We've heard it on the radio, and probably most of us have played it at least once. You could even look at it as the "Autumn Leaves" of R&B. So if you're going to do it "right," studying the original is very helpful. A friend was playing this song in his band, so I thought I would give it a listen. I've heard it done many times, and realized I had never really paid attention to what was going on. Man, was I surprised! Incidentally, I went to my friend's gig, and he asked me to sit in. Guess what song I played!

"Brick House" was released in August of 1977, and it was a huge hit, climbing to Number 4 on the R&B charts. I rate this a "10" on the DG Funk Scale because of how the entire piece fits together. A simple, well-recorded song, "Brick House" is compositionally very sound, with great rhythm section parts. It features an outstanding "fat pocket" drum track, simple fills that perfectly set up the transitions from section to section, and a nasty/funky old school drum sound. And if that's not enough, the drummer, Clyde, is also the lead singer!

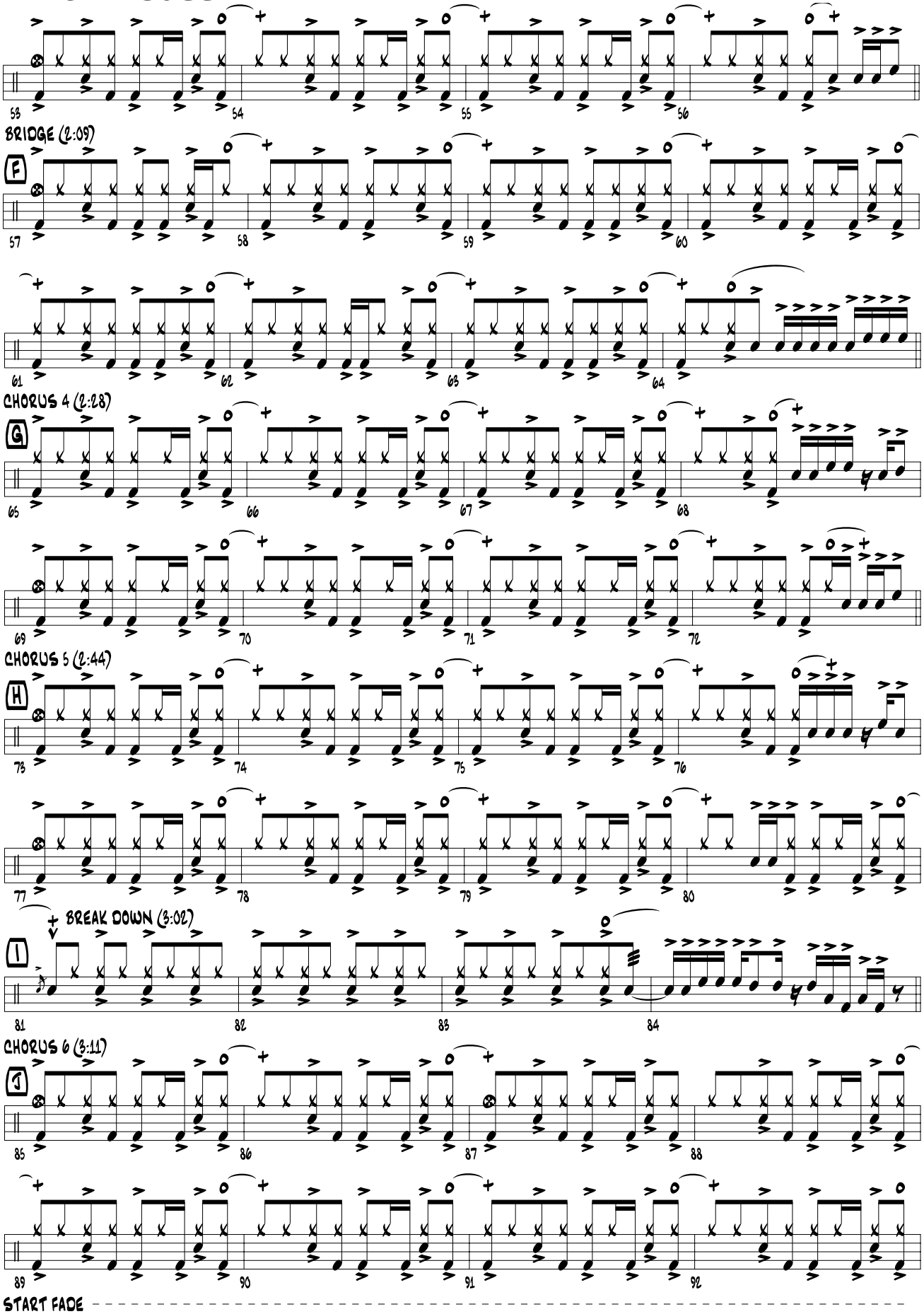
I've listened to the track many, many times, and though some of the fills were hard to hear, I'm confident that I've transcribed everything correctly. I hear three toms in the opening fill, which is repeated going into the choruses out.

Also included are the times that each section begins. I transcribed using iTunes, an iPod, and Quicktime, and the numbers were the same with all three.

For me, songs like these, which are so brilliant in their simplicity, can teach us *many* things about how to play a style, and they're a very important component of our great drumming tradition. Enjoy…the lesson is in the beats!



VERSE 1 (0:50)
B
CHORUS 2 (1:08)
C
VERSE 2 (1:34)
D
CHORUS 3 (1:52)
E

"Brick House"

53
54
55
56
BRIDGE (2:09)
F
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
CHORUS 4 (2:28)
G
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
CHORUS 5 (2:44)
H
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
BREAK DOWN (3:02)
I
81
82
83
84
CHORUS 6 (3:11)
J
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
START FADE

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Hi-Hat Control

Your Left Foot, Part 3

by John Riley

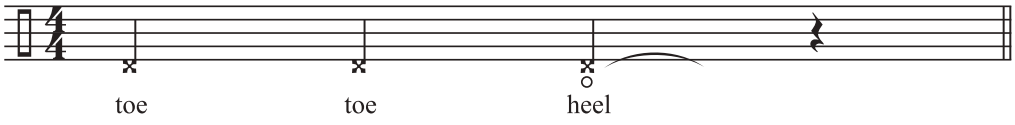
MUSIC KEY

R.C.
S.D.
B.D.
H.H. w/ foot

If you've been working on the material from Parts 1 and 2 of this series, you should be gaining considerably more control and flexibility with your hi-hat. The next step is to develop the ability to play a variety of left-foot ostinatos while playing freely with your other three limbs.

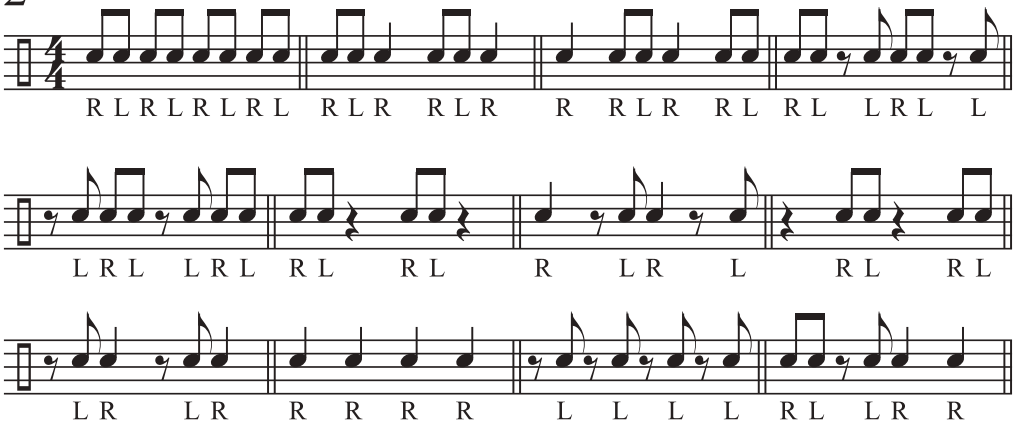
Ed Blackwell, Peter Erskine, and Jeff Watts have developed flowing ideas over this hi-hat pattern.

1

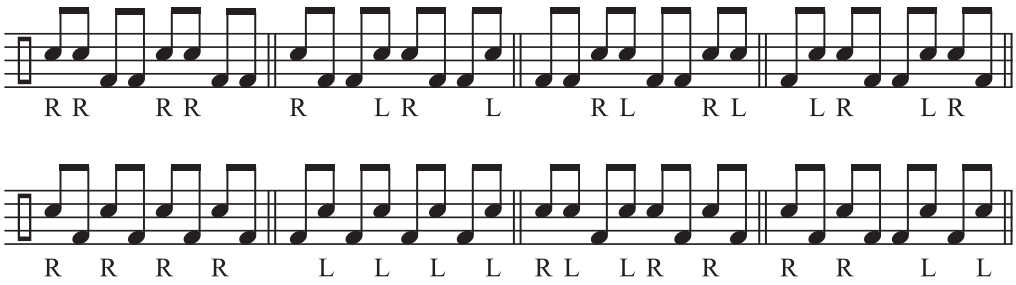


You could play Example 1 flat-footed, but I prefer playing the closed notes with my toe and dropping my heel onto the footboard to generate the splash. That way, I feel active while playing the closed notes. Then when I drop my heel, it feels like a point of rest.

To develop freedom over the ostinato, practice the following cycle. Repeat each phrase as needed. Then work towards playing the entire thing straight down.

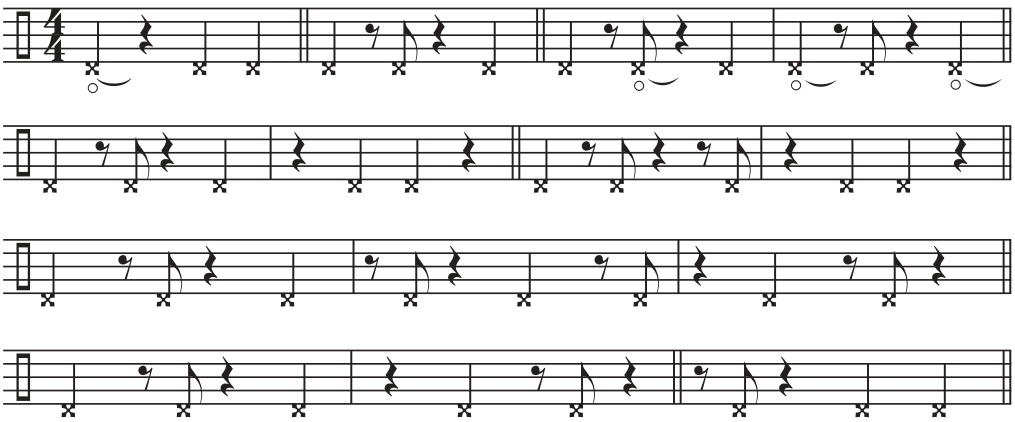
2

Now let's get the bass drum into the game. While playing Examples 1 and 2, insert the bass drum into every space in the hand pattern.

3



Go through the same procedure to gain freedom over these other common left-foot ostinatos.

4



You should also experiment by playing a cowbell, Jamblock, or other sound source with your left foot. Once you've made it through the examples I've included here, make up your own ostinatos. You can also explore triplet ostinatos.

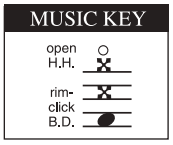
Playing this kind of material is challenging. Remember: the more control you have, the greater your freedom and range of expression. Good luck!

John Riley's career has included work with such artists as John Scofield, Mike Stern, Woody Herman, and Stan Getz. He has also written the critically acclaimed books *The Art Of Bop Drumming* and *Beyond Bop Drumming*, published by Manhattan Music. His latest book, *The Jazz Drummer's Workshop*, was recently released by Modern Drummer Publications.

Essential Grooves

Part 5: Medium Samba

by Tommy Igoe



We've arrived at the fifth installment of our six-part *Essential Grooves* series. So far, we've visited rock, funk, R&B/hip-hop, and jazz. Now it's time to say hello to the densely packed "world" family of grooves.

The earth is teeming with grooves from cultures in places both exotic and ordinary. By examining grooves from other places, you'll also get a study of that native land and its people. Religion, politics, food, and local traditions are powerful players in the history of these fascinating rhythms. It's a compelling area of study, which is why you'll encounter many musical "specialists" who devote the majority of their careers to one specific genre.

As a drumset player who has always aspired to be a chameleon, I try not to get obsessive about any one particular style. But I at least try to understand the core of what I'm attempting to play. One thing that's helped me to play these world grooves authentically is to remember that a majority of them are played by multiple percussionists. We're taking those individual parts and adapting them to the drumset. For example, a hi-hat part may have originally been played with a shaker. Keep that in mind as you explore these grooves, and you'll be in a better position for success.

This month, we're discussing the most recognized groove from Brazil—samba. There are several types of sambas, each with its own signature sound and flavor. It's beyond the scope of this article to get into all of the finer points of each one, so we're going to play a variation of samba that's commonly used on the drumset.

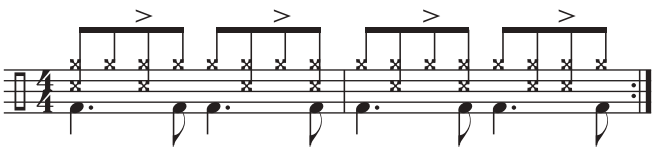
For me, Brazilian music has always held an irresistible hypnotic power. When I was first breaking into the New York scene, I thought I played a pretty mean samba. A Brazilian drummer by the name of Portinho was my hero. I listened to everything he played and copied his feel and groove. I thought I sounded as Brazilian as a blonde 6' 5" Irish/Austrian kid from New Jersey possibly could. Then a little man in a baseball hat came up to me after a set one night and said, "We need to get together so I can straighten out your samba. It's not right." I was thinking, Who the heck is this guy? I asked him his name, and he said, "Portinho."

I stood there in shock. The king of Brazilian drumming hates my samba! I stammered, "What's wrong? What am I doing? Help!" That moment started a life-long friendship with Portinho and opened up a great opportunity for me to get to the next level of rhythmic authenticity in Brazilian music as well as other areas of my ethnic playing.

Portinho said, "You sound really good. But you sound like all of the other young guys in New York when you play a samba." He continued, "You have to *think* like a Brazilian if you want to sound like the real thing." Portinho taught me that you have to be careful which influences you bring to the music. It's great to have many different styles at your command, but you have be in control of those influences and know what enhances or detracts from the music you're playing.

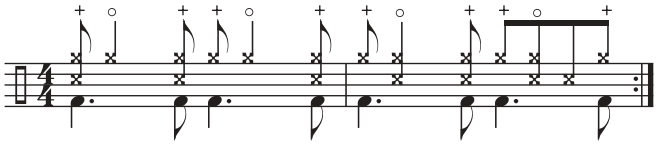
Let's take a look at our main groove for a medium-tempo samba.

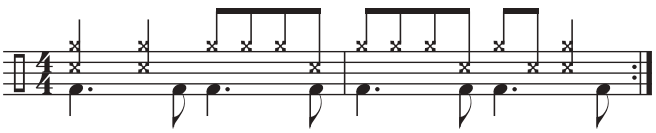
Main Groove



This simple-looking groove contains some rhythmically magical stuff—if played with the right intent. The hi-hat, which imitates the pandeiro (a large tambourine-like instrument), is the key to the entire groove. It's not the bass drum and it's not the syncopated cross-stick rhythms. It's all about the hi-hat. The hi-hat is what binds this groove together and makes it flow, much like the ride cymbal in jazz. The accents in the hi-hat part should be taken as a suggestion and played very subtly. The bass drum, taking on the surdo part (a large Brazilian drum played with a mallet), is often giving more weight on beat 3 (or beat 2 if it's written in cut-time or with 16th-note subdivisions in 2/4). Sambas can be notated in any time signature. That's why I wrote the grooves and the chart in different ways. And that's what you'll often see in real situations. (By the way, the main groove can also be in cut-time. Just change the time signature to 2/2 and count it in "two." It's all in how you look at it.)

Variation A

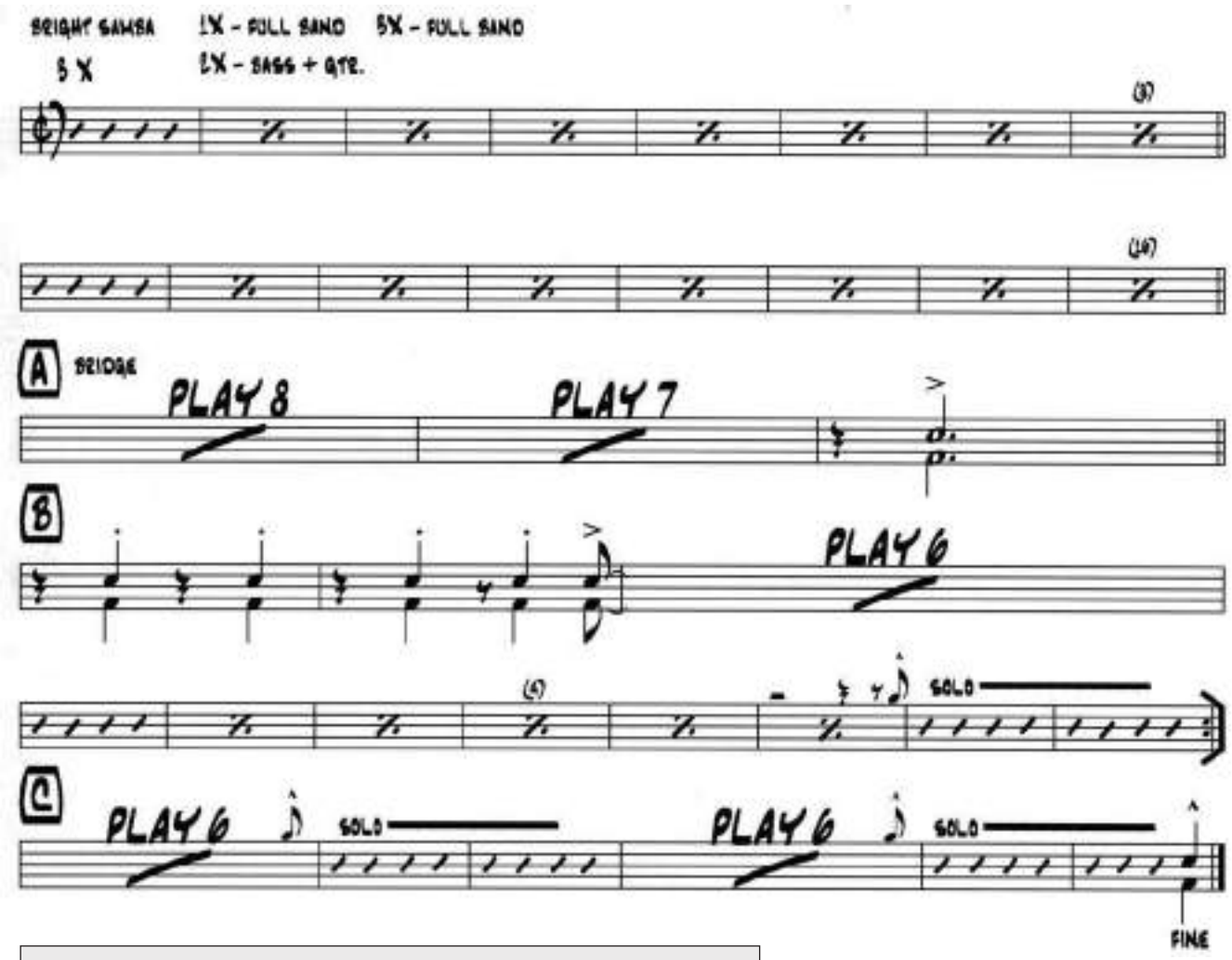
Variation A contains one of my favorite hi-hat variations. Brazilian drummers play with some amazing hi-hat textures. You'll have a great time getting this one together.

Variation B

If you try to play the main groove to this month's song, after a few bars your right hand will probably feel like it's about to explode. If you don't have the chops to play the continuous 8ths, then Variation B will help you get by.

There's no magic pill to pulling off hi-hat parts like what's in our main groove. You simply have to work at it. Stay relaxed and calm, and flow through the groove. Good sambas sound warm and syrupy. There's roundness to a proper samba feel that you'll never get if you're tense. Remember to breathe, keep your shoulders down, and relax.

Now check out the chart.

The first thing you should notice is that the chart is in cut-time, while our grooves are written in 4/4. No big deal. If you want to count the chart in a fast 4/4, go ahead. But you can also count it in cut-time with two beats per bar. The tempo will be the same, so the choice is yours.

A bigger issue will be trying to keep up with this song using our main groove. Try using Variation B if your right-hand chops start to break down. There are a few solo spaces towards the end of the song, so use your best judgment. They're short, and you have to hand the time back to the band. So hand it back nicely!

Of course, this has been an all-too-short discussion on an incredibly rich and diverse groove. If you're inspired to check out some more samba, I suggest that you start with anything by Djavan, Manfredo Fest, Caetano Veloso, or Sergio Mendes. Next month we'll conclude our series with a fast songo, featuring a very intricate chart.

Tommy Igoe is the creator of the "Groove Essentials" series of products published by Hudson Music. He is currently serving as the drummer and assistant conductor of the Broadway musical *The Lion King*. This article is excerpted from Tommy's book *Groove Essentials: The Play-Along*, which is available through Hal Leonard. Used with permission.

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Play It Like You Mean It

by Jeremy Hummel

In his June '06 *MD* cover story, Chad Smith of The Red Hot Chili Peppers said, "You have to play with confidence. You have to *own* the drums." This is a concept that I've been trying to drive home to my students, and to other drummers. Whether at lessons in my house or at a performance in a club, I've witnessed far too many drummers who come off as hesitant. The drumset is one instrument that is *not* meant to be played hesitantly.

I realize that we all have different personalities, with varying degrees of confidence. I also understand that when one is learning something new, confidence doesn't play too big of a role. But once you figure out a new groove or pattern, or learn a song, you've got to reach down inside and *own* that part or groove.

One way I've tried to explain this is to use a comparison to athletes. Think of the first few times that you play through a new part or song as "preparation for the game." In football, when Sunday comes around, those guys are *prepared*. They play with confidence, letting it all hang out. They are using their instincts rather than conscious thought, which they're able to do because of their preparation.

It's Not How Hard You Hit

Playing it like you mean it applies to all styles of music. I've been asked the question, "Does playing with confidence mean playing louder?" My answer is, "Only if that's what's appropriate for the music." Confident playing isn't measured by your volume, but by the passion, life, and soul you inject into the music.

Let's take one example: a gig at which you are merely an accompanist. I recently started gigging with a singer/songwriter named Bret Alexander. We're going out as a duo, playing some small rooms where my tools include a small kit, a djembe, and some shakers and other percussion instruments. Even when I'm simply providing a pulse with a pair of shakers, I try to approach every note with heart and soul. It's important to realize that you can play at low volumes and still be confident within the music.

Confident playing isn't measured by your volume, but by the passion, life, and soul you inject into the music.

Remember, the musicians you're playing with are relying on you to provide the foundation. Drummers are the engine that drives *all* genres of music. Why else are the drums tracked first in the studio? Why else do bands go outside of their own group to get a session drummer? One reason is because it's quicker than trying to "correct" a sub-par drummer. But more importantly, the experienced and confident session guy will ultimately make the track sound better.

Where Does YOUR Fire And Confidence Come From?

I sometimes ask myself if having fire and passion in one's playing is something that can be learned. Or is it an intangible quality that you either have or you don't? While I do believe that many of the great drummers are born with it, I also think that fire and passion in one's playing can be improved. Here are a few suggestions.

Immerse yourself in music of all kinds. I'm floored by the number of young musicians who, when asked to name some of their favorite bands, can cite only one or two artists. Exposure to your craft is key!

Bring your emotions to the drums. Everyday life experiences are fantastic motivations for soulful playing. For example, the obvious one would be if someone had "done you wrong" recently. You could tear into your kit at that night's show or rehearsal and put some vengeance into your playing.

On the other hand, maybe something really exciting has happened to you (new girlfriend...new gig...you won the lottery...), causing you to approach your drumming with a

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joyful exuberance. The point is to use what's going on in your life to express yourself on your instrument.

Make us believe! Drummers and singers are generally the ones who sell a song. The music can move a listener when the vocalist delivers a performance with conviction. The next time your band plays a song, ask yourself if you're *drumming* with conviction. Would you feel it if you were a spectator or a listener, rather than the player? If the drummer doesn't provide a groove that shakes butts or makes heads bob, the chances for success are much slimmer.

You've Played That Song 10,000 Times

It's one thing to play with a newly found—or rediscovered—passion. It's another to maintain that passion in the face of brutal repetition. Those of us who have played in cover bands sometimes despair at how many more times we must sit through "Mustang Sally," "Old Time Rock 'N' Roll," "Born To Be Wild," "Smoke On The Water"...you get the point. Even on the best of gigs, if you're doing original material several nights a week, or sticking to the same set list whenever you perform, monotony can set in. Here are some ways to remedy the situation.

"I'm just glad to be here." I spent a little over two years in a blues band, and after the first six months I was sure that if I had to play Stevie Ray Vaughan's "Pride & Joy" one more time, I was going to go crazy. But then I'd stop and think to myself, "Hey, at least you've got a gig." We were playing three to four nights a week steadily throughout the year. Having a gig is something to be thankful for in itself.

"Tonight, I'm really going to lock in with the bass player." You woke up in a bad mood and ran around like a headless chicken just to make the gig on time. You're tired, and frankly, you really don't feel like playing tonight. To make matters worse, there are only twenty-five people in the club. What do you do?

Make a conscious decision to lock in with the bass player and create a deeper pocket than the two of you have ever had before. There may only be twenty-five people listening, but every single one of them is going to dig it. Remember, it's not the people who *didn't* show up that matter, it's the ones who *did*.

"My goal tonight is to have everyone on the dance floor." Granted, this should be your mentality every time out, but sometimes that stiff dude at the back table just won't get off his ass to dance. Tonight, it's going to happen!

"Let's try something new." Another approach would be to try a few new fills or other subtle nuances in the songs. It shouldn't be anything too obvious or wild enough to throw your bandmates off. Just a bit of spice to keep things interesting for you.

It Ain't About The Notes

So you don't have the best chops in the world. Who cares? The band hired you for a reason. Even if you're just laying down 2 and 4, you should play that groove like you'll never play drums again. The passion, personality, and confidence you invoke is what gives the music life.

A hesitant drummer can make a great band mediocre. A confident drummer can make a mediocre band sound great. Play it like you mean it!

Jeremy Hummel was an original member of Breaking Benjamin. He helped that group achieve platinum status with their second release, *We Are Not Alone*. He has since turned his efforts to session work and drum instruction in Pennsylvania. Jeremy can be reached at his Web site, www.jeremyhummel.com.

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Do-It-Yourself Percussion, Part 4

Maraca Rods

by Glenn Kotche

This column is dedicated to providing drummers and percussionists with simple and inexpensive do-it-yourself projects for building and modifying instruments and accessories. This month's project is maraca rods.

Maraca rods are created by affixing lightweight shakers to the ends of commercially available multi-rod sticks. This results in a sympathetic shaker sound when the rods are played on the drums. Maraca rods can also be played like maracas to get only the shaker sound. I encourage you to experiment with your own ideas, but the following method is the one that I've had the most luck with.

Gathering Your Materials

You'll need a pair of rods, in the brand and model of your choice. You'll also need two ping-pong balls, some sort of shot or similar shaker-fill material, a couple of inches of heat-shrink tubing, and some super glue.

Many different materials can be used as the shaking component, including rice, corn, BB's, and peppercorns. However, I strongly recommend shotgun shot. These are the extremely small metal pellets that are used in most commercially available shakers and eggs. Your best bet for finding shot is at a sporting goods store that has hunting accessories. Or you can try the Internet. It's usually possible to find a large bag or tube (20–25 lbs.) for under $15. Since the amount needed for this project is quite small, I recommend sharing the bulk purchase with some other drummers, if possible.

The ping-pong balls can also be found at a sporting goods store, and sometimes at toy, dollar discount, and department stores. Heat-shrink tubing is a soft rubber tubing that can be easily cut. It will be used here as a seal. You'll want to get at least the $^3/_4$"-diameter size in order for it to fit around the rod. The tubing can be found at hardware and electronics stores.

The materials needed to build maraca rods are inexpensive and easy to come by.

Putting 'Em Together

To begin the project, use a pencil to trace the back end of the rod onto the ping-pong ball, being sure to do this away from the seam of the ball. You'll wind up with a circle about the size of a penny traced onto the ball. This is the portion of the ball that needs to be removed. You can use a drill with a sharp bit to puncture and rout out the hole, or use a small, sharp knife to puncture the ball and cut out the circle. Whichever method you use, be careful!

The next step is to put some shot into the ball. The amount is up to you, but be careful not to use too much, since that will adversely affect the balance of the rod. I recommend about a teaspoon's worth.

Now you need to fit the back end of the rod inside the hole in the ball, inserting it about $^1/_4$" to $^1/_2$". Use the super glue to careful-

The finished maraca rod can be used to create a variety of percussion effects on and off the drums.

ly seal the rod to the ping-pong ball. Allow the glue to dry thoroughly.

The next step is to cut about a 1" portion of the heat-shrink tubing and slide it over the rod until it firmly meets the ping-pong ball. Make sure the tubing is snug against the ball. Heat the tubing with a heat gun or common blow dryer, until it shrinks to form a tight seal. Be aware that too much heat can deform and melt the ping-pong ball, so use just enough for the tubing to shrink.

That's all there is to it. You should now have a functioning maraca rod.

Variations On A Theme

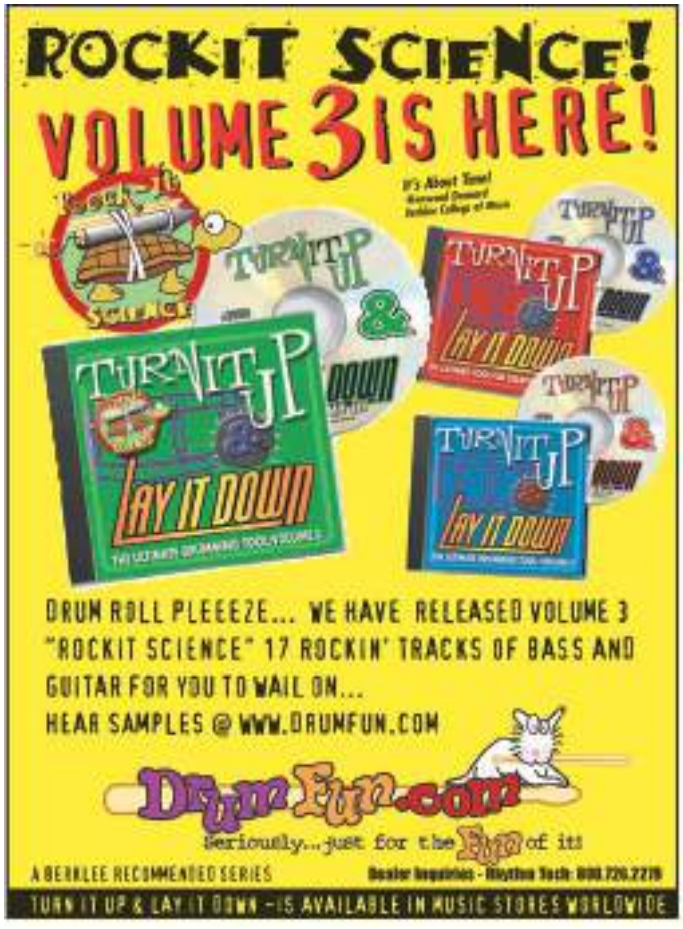
The ping-pong ball maraca idea can be used with any type of stick or mallet. However, since the shaker is relatively quiet, I've found that it works best on rods or non-retractable brushes. This pairing allows the shaker part to be heard. Additionally, the balls tend to last much longer when used in lower-volume situations.

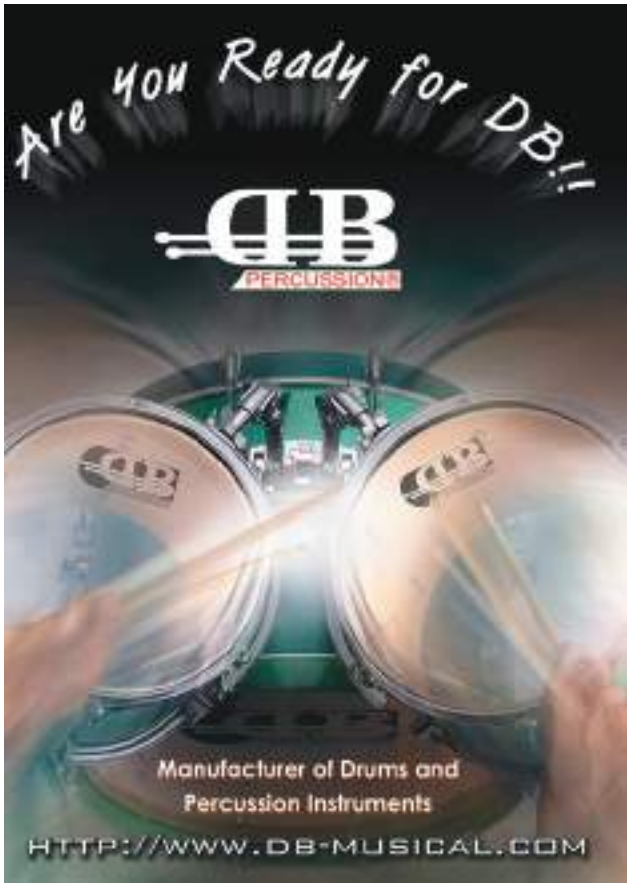
This close-up shows how the heat-shrink tubing helps seal the ball to the end of the rod.

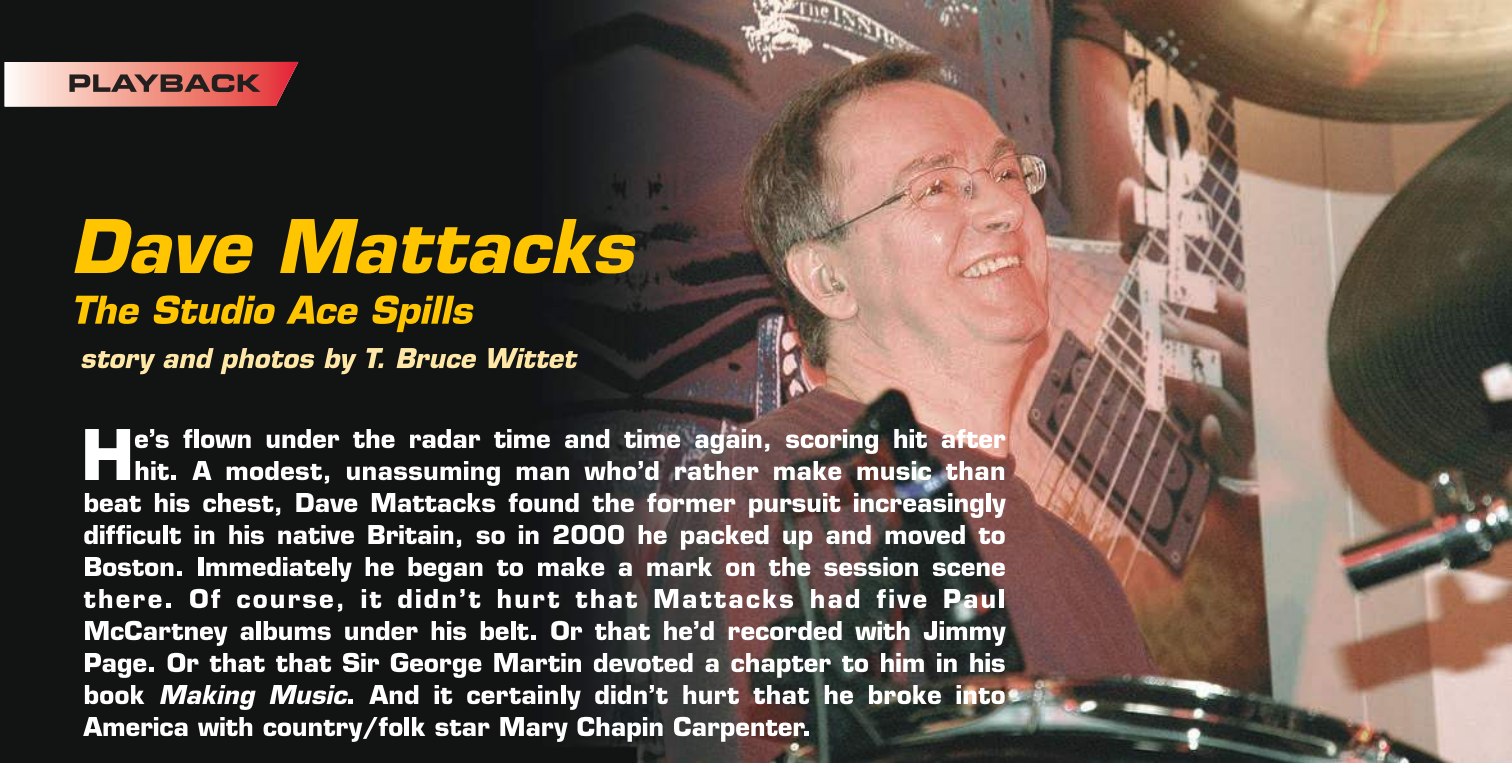
You should be able to get used to the added weight of the maraca rods with relative ease. Some drummers who like to hold their sticks at the very ends will find it necessary to choke up a bit. I don't recommend using the ping-pong ball ends as mallets, since the thin plastic shells of the balls dent easily, and the balls can break if hit against rims and cymbals. However, it is this very thinness of the plastic shell that gives the shaker a good sound, while making it light enough to attach to a rod.

This simple DIY project can provide you with interesting and useful sonic effects. Maraca rods are easy to create, and they're fun to play. Give 'em a try.

Glenn Kotche is the drummer/percussionist for eclectic rock band Wilco.







Dave Mattacks

The Studio Ace Spills

story and photos by T. Bruce Wittet

He's flown under the radar time and time again, scoring hit after hit. A modest, unassuming man who'd rather make music than beat his chest, Dave Mattacks found the former pursuit increasingly difficult in his native Britain, so in 2000 he packed up and moved to Boston. Immediately he began to make a mark on the session scene there. Of course, it didn't hurt that Mattacks had five Paul McCartney albums under his belt. Or that he'd recorded with Jimmy Page. Or that that Sir George Martin devoted a chapter to him in his book *Making Music*. And it certainly didn't hurt that he broke into America with country/folk star Mary Chapin Carpenter.

We asked Mattacks to reflect on a few of the most significant recording sessions he's been on. When listening to these recordings, what's immediately clear is Dave's ability to bring out the best in his fellow musicians. Perhaps it's something to do with an incredibly lazy rimshot backbeat, or a bass drum pulse that drives a stake through the heart of any rhythm section. It certainly isn't due to theatrics. In fact, famed British producer Gus Dudgeon once looked out through the glass at Mattacks doing his thing, and remarked, "There's not much movement going on out there, and he's not hitting that hard—but that's a hell of a big drum sound I'm hearing!"

Fairport Convention
Liege And Lief (1969)
Nine (1973)

That was my first proper studio session. John Wood, an ex-Abby Road engineer, had started up Sound Techniques studio. I set up and said to him, "I heard you've recorded Kenny Clare. Can you make me sound like him?" He replied, "You *play* like him and you'll sound like him!" That was the first stage of a long learning curve.

I used a round-badge Gretsch kit with a complete front head on the bass drum. John was okay with that because he was from the old school: *This is the sound they're making and it's up to you to capture it*. As I freelanced more, it became practical to have a hole in the front head.

Some of the Fairport tracks were traditional dance tunes. The slip-jigs I heard as a jazz 3/4, and the 4/4 reels I interpreted by playing the double-time upbeat on the hi-hat and the half-time backbeat on the snare. Had I played the upbeats on snare, it would have been polka land. Some have referred to this as the marrying of English traditional music with a rock 'n' roll sensibility.

Incidentally, I was invited by the BBC in February 2006 to join with the surviving members of Fairport Convention to receive an award for *Liege And Lief*, voted the most influential folk-rock album.

By the time we recorded *Nine*, I was starting to understand how the sound changed from behind the drums to the control room. I was also tuning a little higher. The turning point for that was when Fairport played LA's Troubadour club and Led Zeppelin sat in. I recall going out into the room and listening to Bonzo on my drums. I realized my tuning was so low that the three toms sounded almost identical in pitch.

For backbeats, I'd already been favoring hitting the rim and the center of the drum simultaneously, whereas some players were just hitting the center. And I was playing with the butt end of the stick for a fatter sound.

Nick Drake
Bryter Layter (1970)

I realized at the time that this album was special, but I couldn't have foreseen the level of attention Nick Drake would get some thirty-five years later. He and producer Joe Boyd were incredibly fussy, and they mixed the album several

"My first session with George Harrison was on the morning after John Lennon was shot. ***It was chaos outside his house."***

times. As a result, it sounds as if it could have been released last week: There are no sound-wise "fashion stamps" on it.

On "Hazy Jane #1" Nick's time-keeping was so good, he didn't need any help from me, so I played soft mallets. The concept of space was well entrenched in me then. That was the first take.

Joan Armatrading
Love And Affection (1976)
Shouting Stage (1988)

On the title track of *Love And Affection*, there's an echo/repeat on the cross-stick. Glynn Johns was in the control room doing that live to tape with the faders! He had the overheads bussed to a reverb, and he'd move the faders up and down a 16th note after every hit. There were three mic's on the drums. That's how Glynn recorded The Stones and The Who: two Neumann U87s above the drums and an AKG D30 placed about a foot in front of the bass drum.

On *Shouting Stage*, Manu Katché plays on some tracks, and I cut the title track with Pino Palladino and Mark Knopfler. I used my fingers to tap on the snare batter while playing a cross-stick with my left hand. That idea came from thinking of a way to play grace notes while playing cross-stick. I realized if I played 8th notes on the hi-hat, I could play the in-between 16th notes with my fingers.

George Harrison
Somewhere In England (1981)

My first session with George was on the morning after John Lennon was shot. It was chaos outside his house with journalists. At dinner, George poignantly said, "All we ever wanted was to be in a band." I overdubbed drums on the track "Blood From A Clone." Later I cut the end theme to the *Time Bandits* film.

Jimmy Page
Death Wish II (1982)

If I had known then what I know now about tuning and studio techniques, I would have gotten a damn sight closer to

John Bonham's drum sound, but Jimmy liked it anyway. The snare drum on this, and on ninety percent of the recordings I did until 1980, when I hooked up with Yamaha, was an old Gretsch brass-shell with a triple-flanged hoop on top. Yamaha recently made me a similar 8-lug brass shell. I A/B'ed them, and the Yamaha has so much more pizzazz.

Paul McCartney
Various Albums

On "Dress Me Up As A Robber," from *Tug Of War* [1982], I worked with George Martin and engineer Geoff Emerick. I saw Geoff several months later and he said Paul had done many overdubs but that he'd never needed to use EQ to get drum sounds to come through. He hardly ever used EQ; it was all about mic' choice and placement. Those sessions also produced tracks for *Pipes Of Peace* [1983].

On "Long And Winding Road" from *Give My Regards To Broadstreet* [1984], the original plan was to overdub on top of the original Beatles track. That didn't work, so we recut it with Paul on piano and vocals and Herbie Flowers on bass. George Martin said, "It sounds good, but it's three seconds short for what we need for the film." I said, "Okay, one, two, three," and counted it in at a slightly different tempo. That was it, perfect length. No click.

"All Shook Up," off *Run Devil Run* [1994], was cut at Abbey Road with Geoff engineering again. A lot of the drum sound comes from the Coles overheads. I set up a large kit with a double-headed 24" bass drum. I went to the control room and asked Geoff what he did to make it sound so good. He replied, "I didn't do anything!" That track was the second take.

Elton John
Ice On Fire (1985)
Leather Jackets (1986)

Gus Dudgeon was one of the first producers outside of the folk-rock world to call me for session work. He wanted to put me with Elton because I knew Elton when he was a session piano player. On the hit single "Nikita," Gus later added 16th-note syncopation stuff with a drum machine—fortunately I was right on with the click!

Jethro Tull
A Little Light Music (1992)

On "Living In The Past (Live)," when it goes to the instrumental section, I'm playing 4/4 against 5. I did the European tour for that album with only kick, snare, hats, one crash-ride cymbal, a keyboard on my right, and a glockenspiel.

Mattacks circa 1994, recording XTC's Nonsuch.

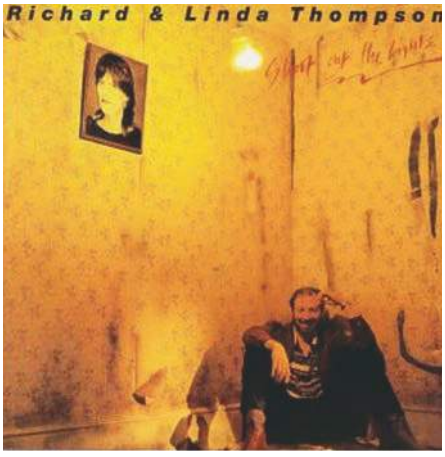
XTC
Nonsuch (1994)

We rehearsed in their hometown and then went into Chipping Norton studios in Oxfordshire. A lot of people talk about the sound of that album. While I did bring lots of Zildjian cymbals and extra snares, you're hearing mostly a black Yamaha 9000 Recording Series kit. I used regular Evans G1s on top and bottom of all the toms.

"Ugly Underneath," "Peter Pumpkinhead," and "That Wave" are great songs. A lot of people like "My Bird Performs" too. I may have been trying to channel Manu Katché on that track.

Richard Thompson, Teddy Thompson
Various Albums

I played on various tracks on many Richard Thompson albums, including *Shoot Out The Lights*, which he did with his wife, Linda. I also played on all of '99's *Mock Tudor*, which was recorded in LA's



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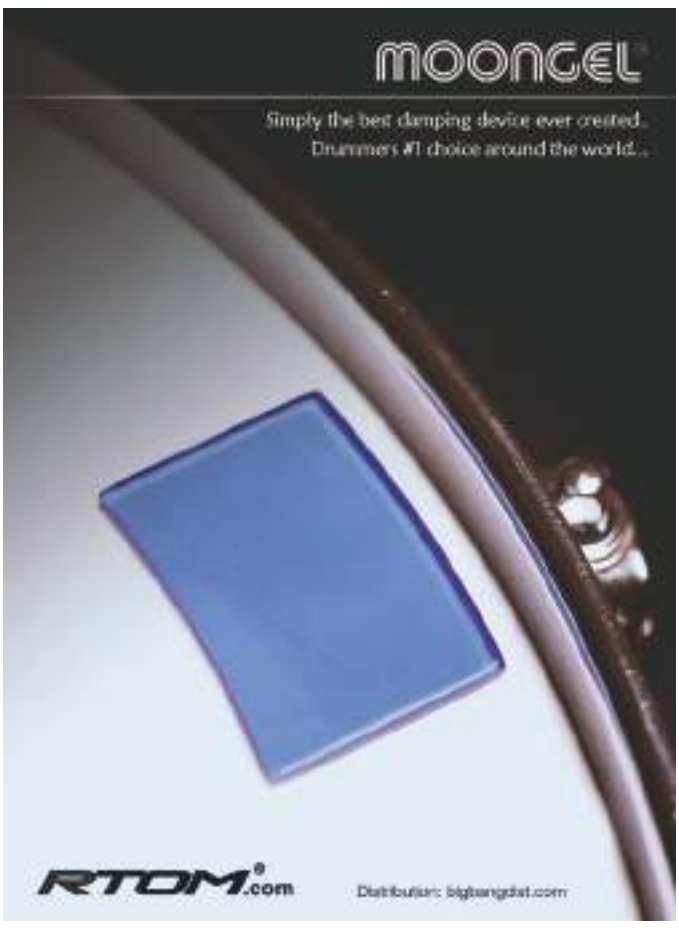


Capitol Studios. Two of the tracks didn't make it onto that CD, but did surface later on the Capitol Records *Action Packed* compilation. I'm proud to share that one with Jim Keltner and Pete Thomas.

I'm on two tracks of Richard's son Teddy Thompson's album, *Separate Ways* [2006]. Shawn Pelton and Matt Chamberlain are also on it. Garth Hudson [of The Band] overdubbed on one of my tracks, "No Way To Be." He told Teddy, "That's some beautiful drumming." Teddy told me, and I was delighted!

Sept Piece (2000)

The band was a jazz trio plus saxophone and a small string section. All of the musicians improvised well. The material, the bulk of which came from pianist John Donaldson, was strong. The kit on that record was a Yamaha Maple Custom with a 14x18 bass drum, an 8x12 tom, and a 14x14 floor tom. I used modern Zildjian cymbals plus a heavy Turkish K that started life with [studio legend] Jim Gordon, went to Jim Capaldi [Traffic], and then to me.

Mary Chapin Carpenter
Place In The World (1996)

That was cut in Chapin's favorite DC studio, Bias, with the great Bob Dawson engineering. I played the house kit and Zildjian cymbals I'd brought. I'd play the track for five minutes, then go into the control room, and it would sound like a million bucks. Chapin plays slightly in front of the beat, and by that time I was getting a handle on moving the beat around when needed. I tend to play a little behind, but I try and play with the band. What's that wonderful Billy Higgins comment: "I'm just trying to play with the cats"? John Jennings is her producer and bassist, and his time feel is great. We both made a few microscopic adjustments.

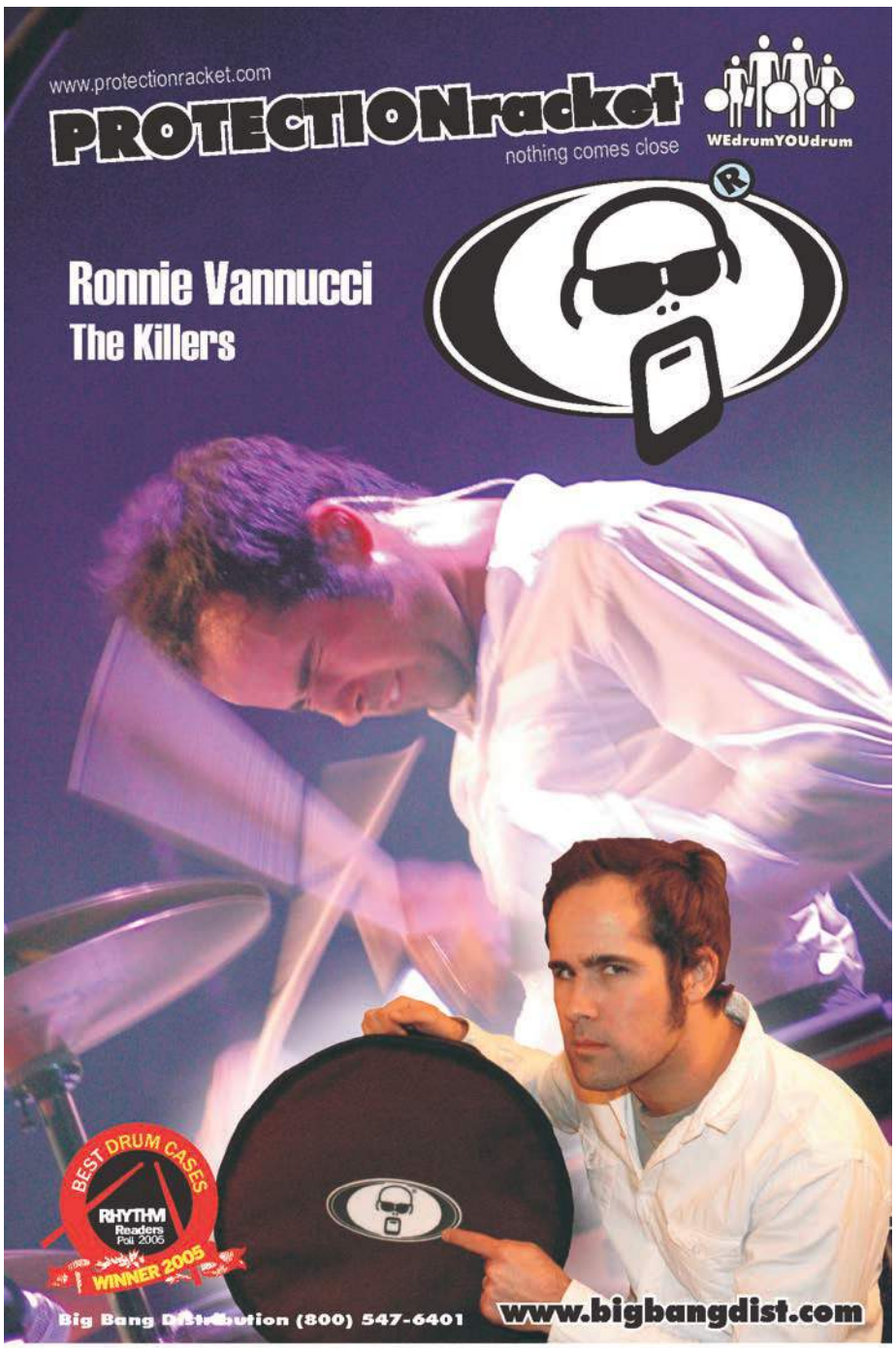
Susan Tedeschi
"Alone" From Wait For Me (2003)

Susan got a Best Vocal Performance Grammy nomination for that track, the first single off the CD. I was trying to think Al Jackson and get that down-home fat tempo. That's a $6\frac{1}{2}$"-deep Yamaha bamboo snare.

Kudos to Susan for the nomination, and I hope she doesn't mind me riding on her coattails. I have to reiterate that for me the song and the vocal are the most important things. Few people buy a record because of some drummer. In my positive moments, I see myself as an okay accompanist. It's what I strive for these days. Paul Motian, Steve Gadd, Peter Erskine, Bill Stewart, and Jim Keltner are all great musicians because they see beyond their own instrument. Dare I say it's what separates the men from the boys?

Over the years, I think I got called for some of these things because I was able to combine a session musician's professionalism with a group member's sensibility. If it wasn't for Fairport, I'd probably now be playing in a bad fusion group.

I recently realized I've spent half of my life trying to be as precise as possible. I'm now spending the other half trying to go in the opposite direction. That's the *shit*. That's a goal I'll never reach, but it's something I aspire to.



Sabian At Twenty-Five

A Family Focus On Innovation

by Rick Van Horn

If you're a drummer under the age of thirty, you probably can't remember when there weren't Sabian cymbals. But the fact is, it hasn't always been so.

Just twenty-five years ago, Robert Zildjian set out to do what many industry pundits said couldn't be done: create a new cymbal company in the face of overwhelming competition from the two major established brands. The fact that Robert had just left the company with whom he shares a name and a lengthy history made his goal even more challenging. It's not surprising, then, that Sabian is celebrating their twenty-fifth anniversary this year with satisfaction, pride, and enthusiasm.

A Brief History

Two words describe the motivating forces behind the success of Sabian. Those words are "family" and "innovation." Robert Zildjian himself (who goes by "Bob") comes from a cymbalmaking family with a tradition that is unparalleled in percussion history. When he founded Sabian in 1981, he brought that sense of family to the new company. Its very name is derived from the names of his children: Sally (SA), Bill (BI), and Andy (AN).

But Bob Zildjian was far from a traditionalist. In fact, he was committed to the concept of innovation. "My desire to improve the art of cymbalmaking, and to discover new sounds and possibilities, became my driving force," says Bob. "Quality, relevance, and value became my priorities."

Fortunately for the fledgling company, their factory in the Canadian village of Meductic, New Brunswick, Canada already had a history of innovation. That factory had at one time been part of AZCO, a division of the Zildjian company. While still with that company, Robert Zildjian supervised the activities at AZCO. "At that time," he says, "most of the testing and experimenting was done at the Meductic factory. We had the time and the freedom to work on small projects, while the main factory near Boston was doing large-scale production of established models. Up here it was a question of inventing new things, like flat hats, pang cymbals, and extra-thin cymbals. We also made the company's first gongs up here.

"When we left Zildjian to start Sabian," Bob continues, "I told everyone that we had the potential to offer great cymbals because of the skills and the attitude of our workforce. At that time we had fifteen of the finest cymbal artisans in the world, a few of whom are still with us. Of course, in our first three years of business, we were not overcome with orders. So we had lots of time to experiment." [laughs]

But it wasn't long before the orders started coming in. The brand gained recognition, helped by artist endorsers like Phil Collins, Dave Weckl, Jamie Oldaker, and Frankie Banali. Based on the success of their original AA and HH series, the company reached a point where they felt confident in taking a bold new direction in cymbalmaking.

That move came in 1993, with the launch of Sabian's AAX series. "'Innovation' is a serious word," says Bob Zildjian, "and nobody had used it in over four hundred years of cymbalmaking history. With AAX, which was the first cymbal to exhibit what we called Autofocus Response, we demonstrated what could happen when innovation and relevance were incorporated to create something totally new. With AAX we hit our creative stride, and since then the number of new introductions from our creative team has been staggering."

The introductions Bob refers to include the HHX, AA Metal-X, XS20, and Vault series, along with a bevy of highly individual Signature cymbal models, as well as recent lines created in conjunction with Rush's Neil Peart (Paragon) and jazz/fusion great Dave Weckl (Evolution and Legacy). The sounds and performance capabilities of these various cymbal lines have earned Sabian worldwide recognition, as well as Music Industry Press and *Modern Drummer* Consumer Poll awards.

Growth Spurt

Sabian has grown dramatically over their twenty-five-year history—especially within the past decade. In 1996, the original 17,000-square-foot factory was augmented by a new 56,000-square-foot building, which has itself since been expanded to 80,000 square feet of factory and administrative space.

A Sabian Selection

Here's a quick overview of Sabian's product line.

AAX

B20 alloy, mid-range pitch, natural or brilliant finish

AAX cymbals use a streamlined design and sound-shaping Auto-Focus Response feature to maximize sensitivity, equalize high and low pitch levels, and purify sounds by filtering out conflicting overtones. The line includes AAXplosion cymbals and the new AAX El Sabor Picante hand crash designed with Santana's Karl Perazzo.

Hand Hammered

B20 alloy, mid to low pitch, natural or brilliant finish

Hand Hammered cymbals are crafted by Sabian's artisans from the company's secret process bronze into cymbals that are rich with dark, traditional tone.

HHX

B20 alloy, mid to low pitch, natural finish (Evolution in brilliant finish)

HHX cymbals combine the traditional tone of Hand Hammered cymbals with modern projection requirements. Super-sized hammering and an exclusive Tone Projection feature add "bite" to the musical sounds. This series includes the HHX Evolution and HHX Legacy lines created with Dave Weckl.

AA

B20 alloy, mid to high pitch, natural or brilliant finish

AA cymbals combine musicality and energy for sounds that are bright, bold, and explosive. Their sound and durability are reinforced with the power of multi-rolled, secret-process bronze shaped under seventy-five tons of hydraulic pressure. This series includes the AA Metal-X line.

Vault

B20 alloy, diverse sounds, wide range of manufacturing methods

The Vault Collection was created to accommodate cymbals and sounds inspired by today's music and musicians, and it also includes unique designs from the artisans in the Sabian Vault. Vault rides, crashes, and hi-hats are designed to maximize the cutting potential of the silver in their B20 bronze. Vault Artisan rides are designed to be very traditional, with crisp, clean stick attack, sizzling low-end tone, and a touch of "bite" in the overall response.

Signature

Various alloys, diverse sounds, wide range of manufacturing methods and finishes

Signature is a creative line of sounds based on input from many of Sabian's top endorsers, ranging from new takes on traditional classics to futuristic concepts. It includes the Neil Peart Paragon line, along with individual cymbals and percussion effects made for such artists as Terry Bozzio, Jack DeJohnette, Chad Smith, Virgil Donati, Mike Portnoy, Phil Collins, David Garibaldi, Ed Shaughnessy, Jojo Mayer, Richie "Gajate" Garcia, and Zoro.

XS20

B20 alloy, mid-range pitch, natural finish

The XS20 line makes it possible to access the durability and acoustic performance of B20 "cast" bronze at "sheet" bronze prices. Hi-tech manufacturing methods allow Sabian to cut the cost of creating this B20 bronze series without sacrificing quality.

B8 Pro

B8 alloy, mid to high pitch, brilliant finish

Sabian uses a rapid-tech process called virtual cloning to create B8 Pro models from master templates. This produces the consistently bright, focused, and effective sounds of more expensive Euro-style cymbals.

B8

B8 alloy, mid-range pitch, natural finish

B8 offers a full range of precision-crafted bronze cymbals. Fully hammered and totally lathed to capture the bright, focused, and penetrating sounds of more expensive cymbals, B8 delivers sound and value at the lowest possible price.

Percussion Sounds

Sabian offers a wide variety of percussion sounds, including orchestral cymbals, marching cymbals, gongs, crotales, bell discs, thunder sheets, cascara plates, and hand hats.

Accessories

Accessory products include Quiet Tone drum and cymbal mutes, cymbal and gear bags, cymbal cleaner, and spare-parts kits.

Sabian founder and chairman Robert Zildjian

Andy Zildjian became president of Sabian this past March.

The new factory houses eight ovens to augment the four in the original building, as well as a dozen lathes. In addition, new automated machines do some of the tedious manufacturing processes, such as buffing brilliant finishes and imprinting logos on the cymbals.

However, the operations that have been elemental to the nature and quality of Sabian cymbals from the beginning remain unchanged. Those include the creation of the alloy castings, the heating and rolling of the cymbal blanks, the lathing, and the hammering, all of which are done by the hands of skilled craftsmen.

Creating A Cymbal Line

Sabian product development and design takes place under the watchful eye of production VP James "Nort" Hargrove and the day-to-day supervision of master product specialist Mark Love. Both have been with Sabian since its inception.

Mark's jurisdiction is the famous Sabian "Vault," which is actually a combination laboratory, metal shop, and treasure trove. It's here that Mark and his team brainstorm, work with artists, and take input from consumers to create new cymbal models and series. Since Sabian's most recent introduction is the HHX Legacy series, we'll use that as an example to explain how an idea gets realized as a cymbal line.

"Legacy started when we developed Evolution with Dave Weckl in 2002," says Mark Love. "We wanted to make an acoustic ride cymbal to complement the brighter sounding Evolution ride. We made some prototypes, but put them aside for later. In 2005 it was time to revisit that project. We already had the shape, the bell, and the hammering all down, so we thought it was going to be easy. We got crashes, hats, and splashes that we were quite happy with, but we couldn't nail the rides.

"Finally, Dave had to come to the factory. We spent two frustrating days making prototypes. On the second day, we found a blank that we'd tucked away when we were working on Legacy prototypes four years earlier. It had started out as a 21" AAXplosion blank. We had given it the AAX hammering before it was lathed. That hardened the metal, giving it a totally different character than if we had just lathed it and then done our HHX hammering. At that point, things just clicked.

"I was aware that Dave sometimes put tape on his ride to control the sustain and spread," Mark continues. "I've always felt that if someone is using tape on a cymbal, they've got the wrong cymbal. So I said to Dave, 'With the Legacy ride being so light, we want to control the overtones and spread. Let's build a dampening feature right into the design. We'll leave an unlathed portion, which will provide the necessary control.'

"Every Legacy model has a story behind it," Mark insists. "The 22" ride was originally going to be an unlathed 21". But we were trying to achieve a few things that Dave was fond of, and we found that the 21" wouldn't go where we wanted it to go. So we started over, and we ended up with a 22" Hand Hammered cymbal with extra hammering. And even though the 22" Legacy is called the 'heavy ride,' it's actually a medium-weight cymbal. It's kind of a mild version that's closer to an Artisan ride. That's the sound that Dave wanted.

"The Ozone ride is another story. Dave called me, saying, 'What if we take a Legacy ride and cut five holes into it, like in the Evolution Ozone crash? Maybe we can get the stick articulation of the Legacy, with a bit of the trashy Ozone sound.' So we made a few prototypes, and Dave fell in love with it. With five holes on one side, the heavier side with the playing surface will always be toward the drummer. That cymbal has a nice ride sound, but it's also very crashable, and it opens up nicely."

Hidden Treasures

Sabian's Vault contains racks of unique creations from Mark and his team. "They're great cymbals," says Mark, "but they don't conform to the specs of any of our established lines. Still, we never know when an artist might walk in and decide that one of those cymbals is almost the perfect sound for him or her. That gives us a reference point from which to work in order to create one that *is* the perfect sound.

"Over the years we've experimented and identified what certain profiles do, what different types of lathing and hammering do, and how various combinations of these factors add up to totally new sounds. When an artist comes here looking for a new sound, we ask, 'What are you using now? What does that cymbal do, and what *doesn't* it do that you want it to do?' From there, we can theo-

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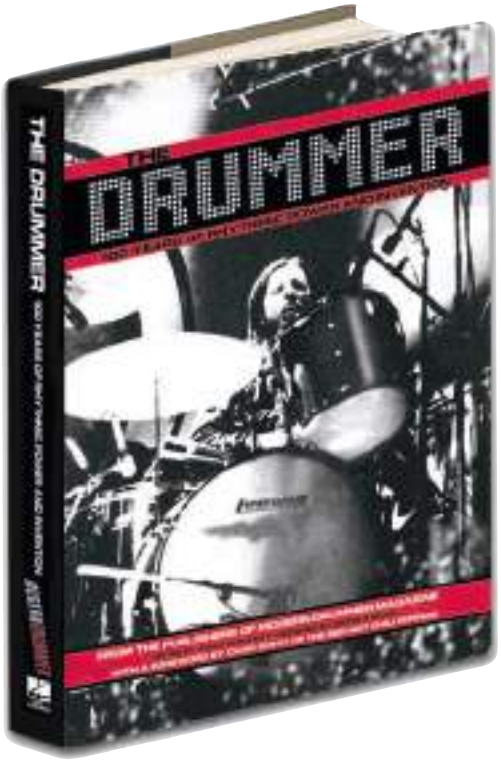

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rize what should be different in order to get to the sound that the drummer wants to hear. We start altering certain parameters, based on what we know about cymbal anatomy. Then we have proprietary little tricks to bring out a cymbal's highs, or boost the sustain."

Master product specialist Mark Love (second from left) heads Sabian's creative team, shown here in the company's famous Vault.

Something For Everyone

Sabian's attention to a drummer's desire for a personal sound isn't reserved for major artists. "Some cymbal companies won't do custom cymbals at all," says Mark. "We do, and it's one of the things that's built Sabian to where it is today. So if you want a 26" AAX Dark ride, we can do that. I just took an order for a ride cymbal with an AA profile, but with hand hammering. Another guy sent us a very old, cracked cymbal that had bolts in it to hold it together. He wanted us to duplicate that in a new cymbal. I asked him whether he wanted the sound that was *left* in his cymbal, or the sound it might have had before it was broken. The fact is, we could go either way.

"What I like," Mark continues, "is when customers tell us what they want their cymbal to sound like, and then leave it up to us to determine the best way to achieve that sound. In some cases, what they're looking for is a variation on an existing theme. For example, in our Signature series we offer Jojo Mayer Fierce rides and crashes, but not hi-hats. But we've made Fierce hi-hats for Jojo and for other people, based on requests we've received after those people had heard the rides and crashes."

Because Mark's crew is so busy, it might take them twelve or sixteen weeks to finalize a custom cymbal for a consumer. And no, they can't whip up a dozen prototypes for each special order. "We don't have that kind of time," says Mark. "But we will apply all of our expertise to create the best possible answer to every request, just as we do for Chad Smith, Dave Weckl, and Neil Peart."

Looking Ahead

"The learning curve we experience on any one project helps us with the next one," says Mark. "Every piece of information is recorded and cataloged against future need. What we learned developing AAX helped us later to develop HHX and Evolution. These days, we're making more and more original models, which we've started taking right out as prototypes to dealers and customers on our Vault Tour.

"At some point one wonders how many things can be done with a piece of metal,"

This is just one of eight new ovens that Sabian uses to create their cast cymbals.

If it ain't broke, don't fix it. While some other processes have been automated in recent years, skilled Sabian craftsmen still hammer and lathe cymbals by hand.

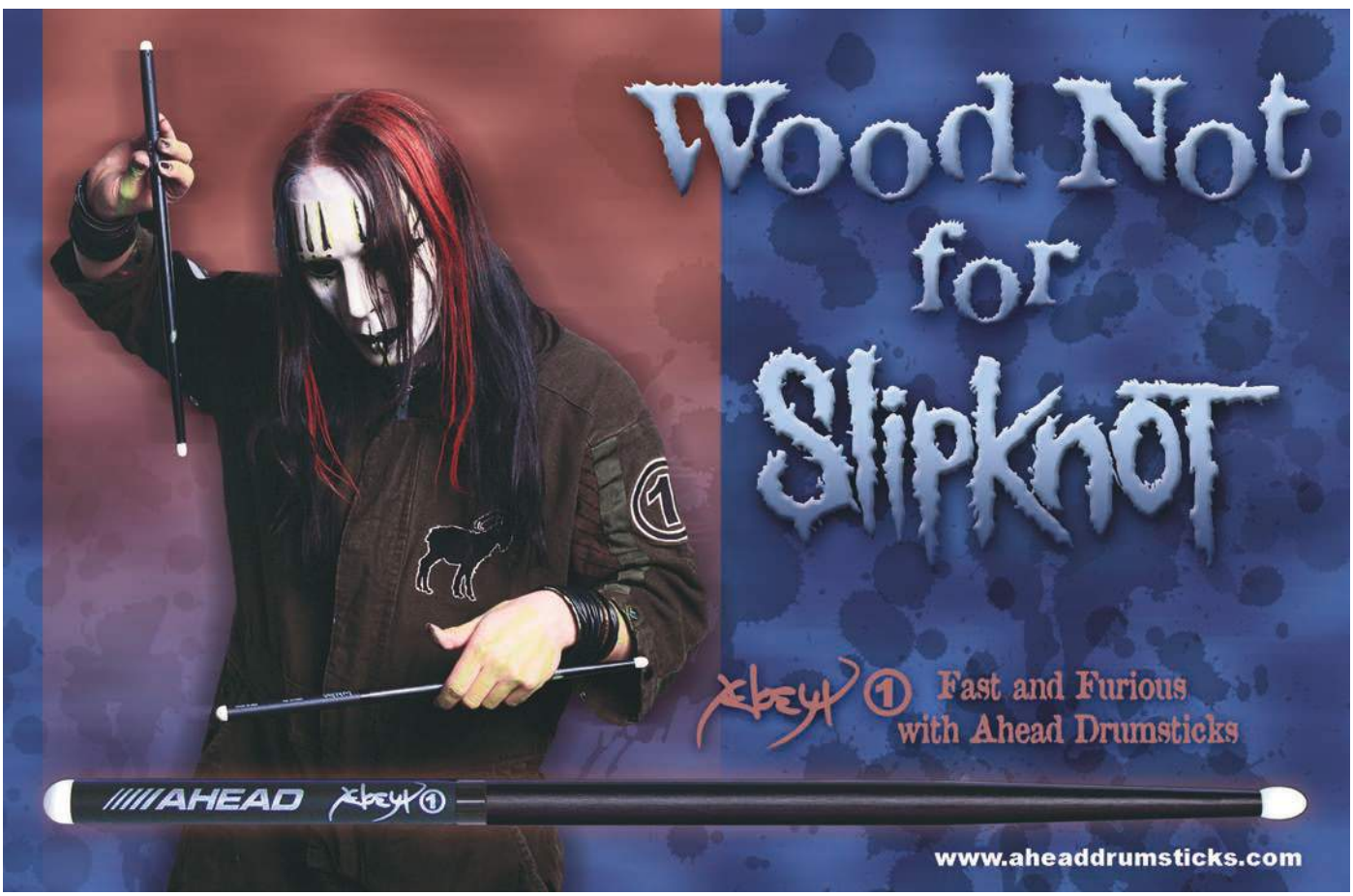
Mark concludes. "Fortunately, there seems to be no end to it. We're always looking ahead to the next big thing."

The President's Message

"The next big thing" is an important concept to Andy Zildjian, who was named president of Sabian this past March. Besides representing the next generation of family leadership, Andy also shares his father's dedication to the concept of innovation.

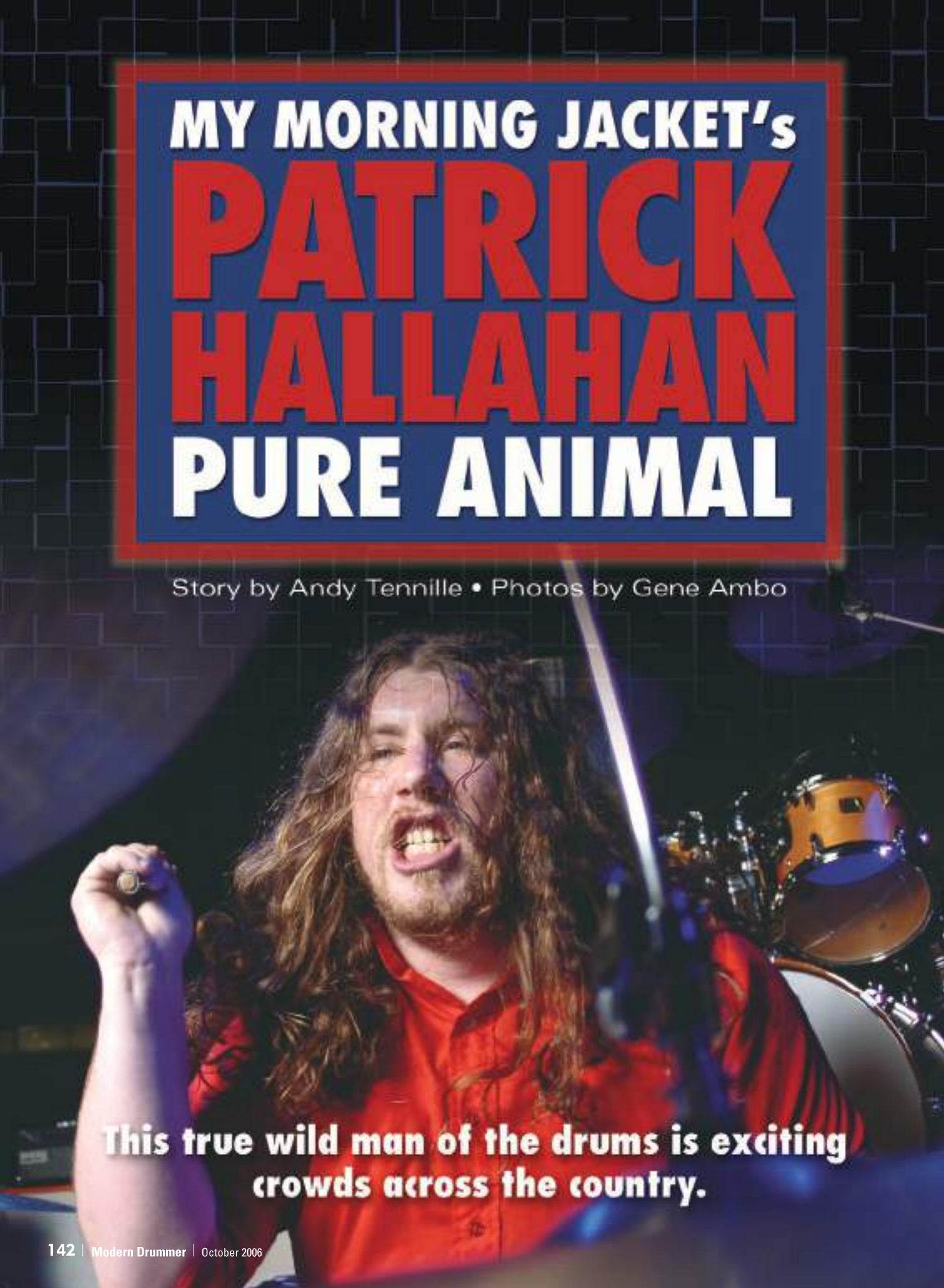
"Sabian innovation comes from a couple of different places," says Andy. "One is that we *like* making cymbals. We'll talk to professional drummers, customers we meet in drum stores, or even just drummers we meet on the street. We'll ask them questions about what they're looking for. We get excited about the sounds they tell us they want. It's the excitement of coming up with something new that makes people happy.

"But we don't make new cymbals just for the sake of making new cymbals," Andy stresses. "They have to be relevant. That's why we talk to all those drummers. If they tell us they want a new sound, we can make it. And if we create a sound that drummers *haven't* asked for but we think they'll like, then that cymbal goes out as a prototype on our Vault Tour so they can hear it in person and we can gauge their reaction. So Sabian innovation takes ideas in *from* drummers, and also offers new ideas *to* drummers. We listen and we respond. I think that's the best relationship a cymbal company can have with its customers, don't you?"



MY MORNING JACKET's PATRICK HALLAHAN PURE ANIMAL

Story by Andy Tennille • Photos by Gene Ambo



This true wild man of the drums is exciting crowds across the country.

"I'm not a very technically oriented drummer. I play from my heart."

Ask Patrick Hallahan who his influences are, and you're likely to hear the twenty-eight-year-old drummer speak in hushed reverence of John Bonham, Keith Moon, or Tool's Danny Carey. Ask Hallahan's *bandmates* in critically acclaimed rock outfit My Morning Jacket who the drummer's biggest influence is, and you're likely to get an answer that's a little more animated.

"He's Animal," says frontman Jim James, referring to the wildly insane drummer in Jim Henson's *The Muppets*. "It's the hair flying all over the place and his arms flailing around as he plays. Most importantly, it's the unbelievable energy Patrick brings to the stage. I feel like he ceases to exist when he sits down behind his drumkit—and Animal is *born*. It's like he turns into this monster that wants to destroy his kit at all cost. He's just such a beast when he gets behind his drums. I've never seen anybody play with such reckless abandon."

Hallahan's drumming is relentless—yet it's precise. Snapping snare shots mixed with thundering tom beats on a song like "One Big Holiday" can suddenly give way to the subtle heartbeat bass drum of "Dondante," augmented by delicate, crisp cymbal accents. This diverse scope of rhythms, coupled with the steady grooves laid down by bassist Two Tone Tommy, serves as the foundation from which My Morning Jacket has delivered its trademark brand of atmospheric rock 'n' roll for more than seven years.

My Morning Jacket formed in Louisville, Kentucky and debuted in 1999 with *Tennessee Fire*. They followed that album in 2001 with *At Dawn,* and Hallahan joined in 2003 for the monumental *It Still Moves* on Dave Matthews' ATO Records. Momentum was building for My Morning Jacket in November 2004, when long-time guitarist Johnny Quaid and keyboardist Danny Cash made the shocking announcement—before a sold-out show at the Metro in London—that they were leaving the band. The remaining trio returned to Louisville to figure out if they wanted to continue as a three-piece or seek new members to replace Cash and Quaid.

"We flew out to LA and auditioned ten pairs of people," Hallahan says, explaining the process through which they met new guitarist Carl Broemel and keyboardist Bo Koster. "Bo and Carl were the first two people to come in, and they raised the bar. Our first show with them was two weeks later, and it ended up being seamless. They've brought it from the very beginning, and we've all grown together. I think *Z* was a celebration of all that. We had gone through so much change. It was a lot of new beginnings, so we tried to approach this album from a very open state. We were willing to try anything and everything. We knew when we were writing and putting it together in the studio that this was going to be a very different album."

Z, released in October 2005, certainly signaled a departure for My Morning Jacket. While James' reverb-inflected, lonesome vocals still soared, supported by the band's layered guitar assault, the complex, polyrhythmic pulse of the album's rhythms was a welcome challenge for Hallahan.

"When I was writing these songs, I just wanted to put the emphasis on rhythm, because I was tired of the guitar rock sound," James confesses. "I wanted to experiment with something different. I'd been listening to a lot of hip-hop and was really getting into those rhythms. I've always loved the way that Patrick and Tom work together. I think they're such a fantastic and dynamic rhythmic duo, so I really wanted to try and showcase them a lot more on the album."

"Having Jim say that when he presented us the songs was a pretty exciting thing to hear as a rhythm section," Hallahan says. "My relationship with Tommy is one of those things that can't really be described in words. He and I have non-verbal communication all the time, where nothing is ever said but it's understood. We both agree that we have to be locked into each other onstage for this band to work. His right hand and my right foot are locked, and that lays a foundation for everyone else so they can take off into the stratosphere. We're the platform for everybody else to jump off of."

My Morning Drums

Drums: Fibes in silver sparkle finish
A. 6½x14 snare (Fibes fiberglass or Ludwig Black Beauty)
B. 8x12 tom
C. 10x14 tom
D. 16x16 floor tom
E. 16x18 floor tom
F. 20x22 bass drum

Cymbals: Istanbul Agop
1. 14" Traditional Light hi-hats
2. 18" Traditional Dark crash
3. 20" Traditional Medium ride (used as crash)
4. 22" Alchemy Sweet ride
5. 22" Trash Hit

Hardware: Pearl Optimount rack, Gibraltar mini-booms, DW 5000 chain-drive pedal (with felt side of beater)
Heads: Evans coated G2 on snare batter, J1 etched snare-side (top head tight, bottom loose, small piece of gaffer's tape for muffling), coated G1s on tom batters with clear G1s on bottoms (almost jazz tuning, batter head slightly higher than bottom, Moongel on each), clear EQ2 on bass drum batter with EQ1 on front (MMJ tour shirts for muffling)
Sticks: Vater 5B wood tip, brushes, and Splashsticks (with egg shakers taped to them)
Microphones: AKG D440 on top of snare and rack toms, D770 underneath snare, D550 on floor tom, D112 on kick, C430 on hi-hat, C414B overhead

MD: What's your first musical memory?
Patrick: My first real musical experience was from my grandmother. She was in a lounge act. Her band was playing down in the basement rehearsing for a wedding or some gig they were going to do. I was this little curly-headed, three-year-old kid standing down in the basement of my grandparents' house watching them rehearse, just mesmerized by these people playing music. I fell in love with the guitar and the drums. I remember putting my hand on the speaker and feeling the vibrations of the guitar as his fingers noodled all over it. I then went back to the drummer and felt all the power and gyration coming from his kit.

That was my first band-oriented musical experience. The drummer ended up giving me a pair of drumsticks—I still have 'em. They were my first. I've held onto them forever. That's how I learned how to play, with those drumsticks. I taught myself how to play by air drumming along to albums, just sitting in my bedroom and playing and mimicking all these great drummers I was listening to.

MD: Do you remember your first kit?
Patrick: I'll never forget it. I got it when I was twelve years old. I bought it with all the money I'd earned mowing lawns and raking leaves. It was the biggest piece of crap ever. [laughs] It was a hybrid kit. I had a Tama bass drum and floor tom, with some old Camco rack toms. Somehow, the toms were jammed into the mounting system with a piece of copper, because they didn't exactly match. They were twenty-five years old, so they'd fall over every time I hit them. As for the cymbals, I kick myself to this day for cracking them because they were really old, beautiful Zildjians. I wish I had those cymbals now.

MD: Did you take drum lessons early on?
Patrick: I never took lessons. So I'm not a very technically oriented drummer. I play from my heart; I don't really play from my mind. In my opinion, there are three types of drummers—the cerebral ones, the ones who play from their heart, and the ones who come from their soul. The soul is the Motown drummers, and the cerebrals are the Neil Pearts and the Mike Portnoys. And somewhere in between there are the guys who play from their heart. I play from my heart.

MD: What are two albums you can't live without?
Patrick: Led Zeppelin's *Physical Graffiti*. The gods came together for that record. I'll never forget the time I bought that album. I was in the seventh grade. I went home and listened to it and my spine tingled, my skin chilled, and my brain exploded. I couldn't believe what was coming out of the speakers. It really is true perfection.

The other album that I can't…live…without…hmmm…I'll say it's a tie between The Who's *Live At Leeds* and Tool's *Ænima*. I feel that Danny Carey strikes the perfect balance between mind, heart, and soul. He's not as cerebral as some, but he accents everything so perfectly. He pulls that whole band together. I feel that Danny embodies the heart, soul, and

technical approaches, and that's very rare.

MD: Where does John Bonham fit as an influence for you?

Patrick: If I had to name one drummer who has affected my style and my outlook on drumming the most, I feel that John Bonham is it. He was a monster, a hugely talented drummer. But he knew when to play and when *not* to play. The man could explode at any given moment, but he knew when to lay back in the groove and let everyone else shine. I think the perfect sign of a great band is when everyone shines. Everybody lets each other shine and they work together towards a common goal to make a huge sound.

MD: Are there any specific challenges as a drummer to play My Morning Jacket's music compared to other bands you've worked with?

Patrick: The band's gonna laugh about this, but Jim's always wanted things slower than the natural tempo I hear in my head. One of the biggest challenges I had when I joined the band was learning to play slower than I felt like playing. If it felt too slow to me, then it was probably just right. [laughs] That's been a big challenge for me.

MD: Tell us a little bit about the kit you're playing now and what you're working with onstage.

Patrick: I was looking for an older-style shell make-up. Jasper stopped making shells and Fibes picked up that recipe. I didn't want an old kit, because I play so heavily, but I like that sound. I needed a road kit that could stand up to being beaten night after night. I also like the fact that Fibes took that on and decided to make their own shells and keep the operation small and intimate.

Right now I'm playing a six-piece kit, but I have all the pieces to make it a seven-piece: 12", 13", 14", 16", and 18" toms along with a $6^1/_2$x14 snare and a 20x22 kick. I want big, huge sounds. I want to tune my drums to where they just explode every time I hit them. And I use every one of my toms, just like Keith Moon. Hey, if you're gonna have 'em, you gotta use 'em.

For my cymbal setup, I went with Istanbul Agop because, again, they're a boutique company. Every cymbal is handmade. I love the fact that a craftsman took a lot of time and energy to make them. Some of the cymbals I have took a week

WIN

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For the entry form and official rules, visit www.moderndrummer.com and click on the image of the iPod. Complete the required information, and you could be the next winner of this unique prize. It's as simple as that!

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and a half to two weeks to make. That said, part of me dies inside every time I crack one because I know some guy sweated his ass off over it. But Istanbul Agop cymbals give me everything I've ever wanted out of a cymbal, and I've played a lot of 'em.

Istanbul Agop has another brand line, Alchemy, which includes the ride cymbal I use. This cymbal gives me everything I want in a ride. I love a good, clean ping, but also a nice, dry sound. And I want a ride that can shift into third gear and explode when I really want it to. This ride does all of that. It just sings like a songbird—a very angry songbird. [laughs]

MD: Would you consider yourself a gearhead?

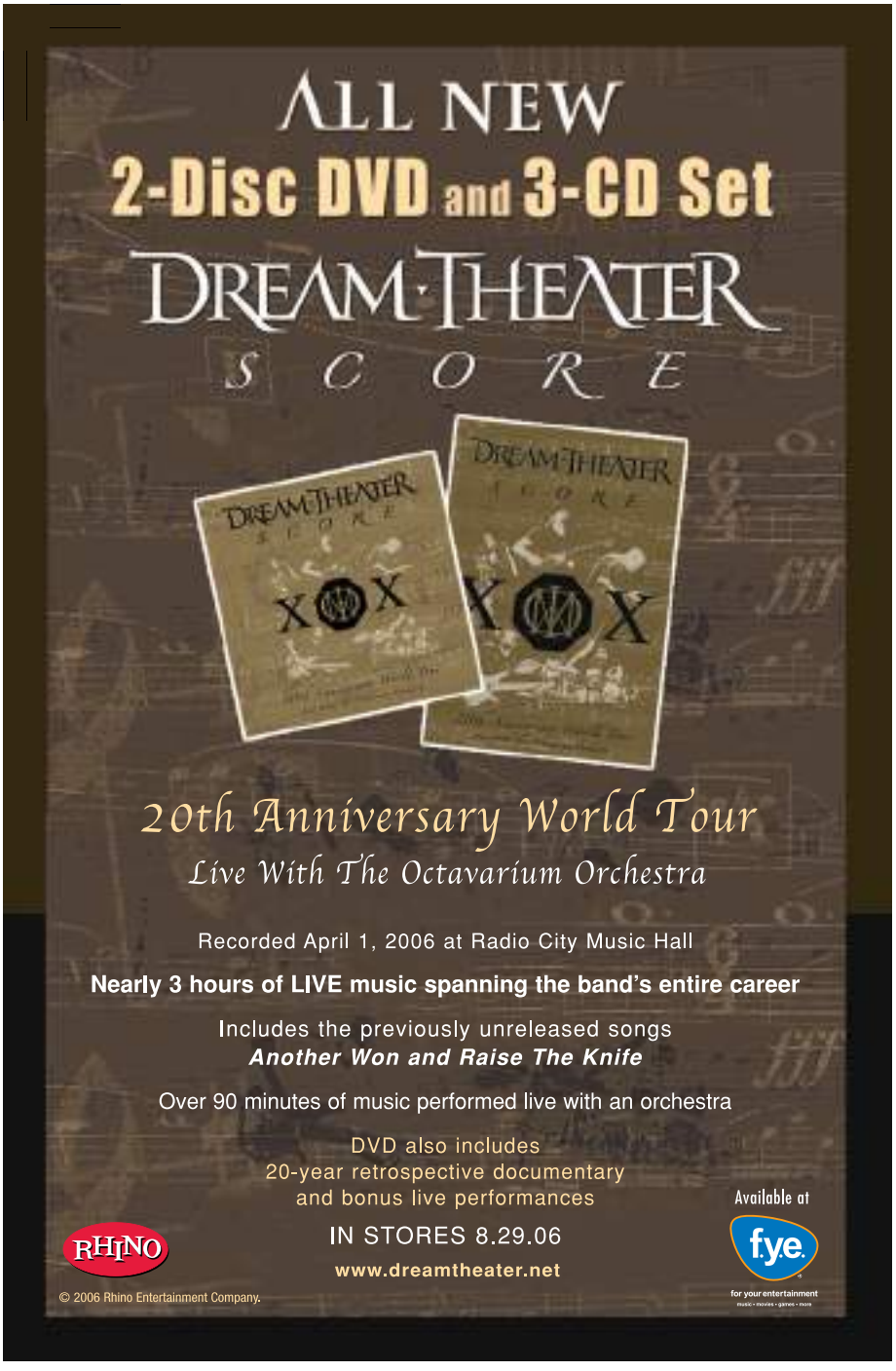
Patrick: I'm not so much a gear guy or a collector as I am somebody who keeps his ear to the ground for something that makes sense with the way I play. I just try to custom-fit my setup to my style. I know how I'm gonna play when the song kicks in and when it's gonna get quiet. I require a lot of sonic variety from my kit because My Morning Jacket has so many different sounds that change from song to song and within the songs themselves. I want performance on all levels. So I try to keep aware of good, quality stuff.

I just bought a brand-new Ludwig Black Beauty snare, which is almost sacrilegious. But I wanted to give a new one a try. I've played two shows with it so far, and I must say it's fantastic. I've played a lot of old Black Beauties and a lot of Ludwigs. They'll never make 'em like that again, but they're getting close. I'm big-time into old drums. But man, you can't take old drums on the road. Again, I don't want to mistreat them. They're like family members. [laughs]

MD: Do you have any kinds of practice routines or exercises away from the band that you do to improve your drumming?

Patrick: Yeah, definitely. First of all, I'm always looking around to learn about new styles and new approaches. When I was younger and just getting started, I did things like read *Modern Drummer* to try and pick up on what's new. Now I'm always watching other drummers and keeping my ear to the ground for new techniques that don't come naturally to me. That's what I'll work on.

Stretching has become a huge thing for



Patrick Hallahan

me. Before shows, after shows, even before we go on tour, I'm always stretching my forearms and wrists so that I can become more flexible and utilize more of a sling-shot approach. I start stretching in the morning right after I wake up and usually do that on and off all day long. About half an hour before we go on, I usually go through a rigorous stretch to get ready. I also have a pair of drumsticks with me pretty much all of the time and I use them to warm up before I go on.

MD: Are there any particular holes or weaknesses in your drumming that you feel need improving?

Patrick: One thing is that I play so hard, I don't play efficiently. That's something I'm constantly trying to work on. I get so pumped up during the course of a song that I sometimes lose control. Most of the time, that's a good thing. But there are times when it takes its toll on my forearms, no matter how much I stretch.

Lately I've been trying to learn how to make the sticks work for me and how to hit hard without having to use my arms as much. That's an ongoing process for me. I've found from watching other drummers that it's really a combination of your arm and your wrist working together to get both finesse and power. I'm constantly looking for ways to strengthen and utilize my wrists in the pursuit of more power.

Also, I'm right-handed, so another thing I'm always working on is improving my left hand, getting it up to speed with my right. That's something I think every drummer works on.

MD: What's your advice to younger drummers who listen to My Morning Jacket and aspire to play drums professionally one day?

Patrick: Wow…where do I begin! [laughs] More than anything, my advice would be to not compromise your principles. Do what you want to do and don't compromise for anyone. Stick to your guns and you'll find like-minded people. Also, drummers should practice day and night. If you really love it and are meant to be playing, then practicing should and will be fun.

Don't ever limit yourself. Push yourself every day and try to learn something new every week to add to your playing. More than anything, feel lucky if you're able to play in a band and be part of a good musical experience, because not too many people get the opportunity.

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Dick Shanahan

Big Band Stylist

by Burt Korall

Since the latter years of the swing era, Dick Shanahan has made important contributions to several notable big bands. These include his taste and flair for rhythmically enhancing the material, his well-developed technique, the diversity and clarity of his sound on the drumset, and the sort of precision that sharply defines an arrangement. All of these qualities have endeared Dick to those who appreciate well-played, strongly projected music.

Shanahan was born in 1921, in Battle Creek, Michigan. He developed an interest in drums and music as a teenager, but there were few opportunities in his area to learn what he wanted to know. Qualified drum teachers were rare, so he learned to read music under the tutelage of local symphony members. He studied piano to more fully understand musical performance, while gaining as much show and band experience on drums as he could.

The young drummer learned a great deal by listening to current recordings—specifically those that illuminated the styles of the different bands, as well as the work of arrangers, soloists, and singers. From this study, he came to know what and how to play in varied circumstances. He also gained useful knowledge by playing with a dance band and taking music classes at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

On The Band Wagon

One of Shanahan's first professional jobs came in 1941, with the jazz-influenced Will Osborne band. Two years later, he moved to the up & coming Les Brown organization. The "Band Of Renown" gave memorable performances of its diversified library of compositions. Shanahan warmly remembers the individuality of singer (and soon-to-be movie star) Doris Day, as well as Randy Brooks and Jimmy Zito (trumpets), Ted Nash (tenor saxophone), and Geoff Clarkson (piano), among others.

Shanahan recorded for the first time in 1943. This Les Brown session, on Columbia, included Joe Garland's "Leap Frog," which continues to serve as the band's theme. The recording is uplifted by Shanahan's loose-limbed, swinging hi-hat work, and by his musically informed playing on the snare and bass drum.

The young drummer's playing displayed the influences of a number of drum stars, including traditional jazz stylist Ray Bauduc of the Bob Crosby band. Gene Krupa, who was the most widely known and technically accomplished jazz/pop drummer of the time, modernized Shanahan's approach and introduced him to facile use of the hi-hat. Nick Fatool helped shape and bring stability to his style. Also key to Shanahan's development were Count Basie's gifted hi-hat player, Jo Jones, modern big band innovator Don Lamond, and the enormously talented Buddy Rich.

Challenged by these players, Shanahan involved himself in an intense study/practice program. He worked with teachers like George Lawrence Stone, Billy Gladstone, and Allen Paley. And he practiced whenever possible, for as long as possible.

Shanahan took his drumming cues—structure and substance—directly from the music itself, and then embellished them in interesting ways.

The technically and musically arresting performances of Buddy Rich set a particular example for the rapidly developing drummer. Shanahan says, "I

really learned to play by listening to and watching Buddy with Tommy Dorsey." Shanahan, like Rich, took his drumming cues—structure and substance—directly from the music itself, and then embellished them in interesting ways.

A telling example of Shanahan's distinctive style can be heard on the 1948 Band Of Renown recording of Irving Berlin's "I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm," arranged by Skip Martin. "The sheer danceability of this arrangement is extraordinary," declared British musician/critic Steve Race. In an interview, Les Brown once told me: "We are concerned with dancers and listeners. 'I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm' has appeal to both factions. That's the reason it became so popular." Dick Shanahan's drumming was a large element of that appeal.

Shanahan played with Tommy Dorsey briefly in 1947, then moved over to Charlie Barnet's band. That band had an enviable feeling for jazz, the blues, and the ideas and unique voicings of Duke Ellington. Playing this music developed a new intensity, a deeper musicality, and stronger technical qualities in the drummer's playing.

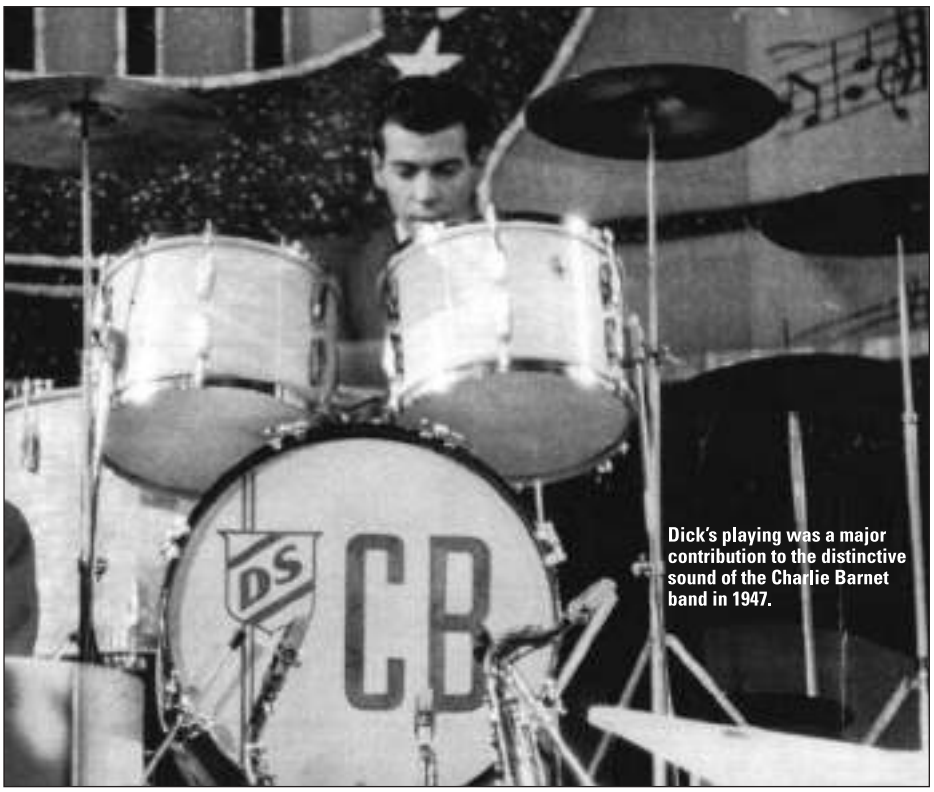
Hooray For Hollywood

After the Barnet experience, Shanahan took up residence in Hollywood. He bought a drum shop, in which he sold equipment and materials directly related to percussion. It wasn't the best time for opening such a business. Big bands were on the decline, and rock had not yet fully emerged. But Dick also taught drums, and he was particularly successful communicating with ambitious students.

Shanahan's involvement in music continued to grow and diversify. He became an increasingly busy session musician in the LA studio scene, and he involved himself in all kinds of playing, including movie soundtracks, popular recordings, and television.

Though he doesn't maintain the schedule he once did, Dick Shanahan is still active today. He remains dedicated to making his drumset—snare drum, bass drum, four tom-toms, hi-hat, and several cymbals—a highly communicative source of the colors and rhythms so crucial to expressive performances.

In 1945, the hot young drummer for Les Brown & His Band Of Renown was featured in a Gretsch drum ad.



Dick's playing was a major contribution to the distinctive sound of the Charlie Barnet band in 1947.

Dick Shanahan is still swinging today. Here he is playing at LA's Sweet & Hot Jazz Festival in 2005.

RECORDINGS

Ratings Scale
- ★★★★★ Classic
- ★★★★ Excellent
- ★★★ Good
- ★★ Fair
- ★ Poor

TRIO BEYOND SAUDADE

★★★★½

Legendary drummer **JACK DEJOHNETTE**, guitar icon **John Scofield**, and organ virtuoso **Larry Goldings** formed Trio Beyond to pay homage to visionary drummer Tony Williams' seminal fusion band Lifetime. On this double-CD set, captured live at London's Queen Elizabeth Hall, the trio blazes through classic Lifetime material ("Spectrum" and "Emergency") as well as tunes like "Seven Steps To Heaven" and "Pee Wee" from Williams' tenure in Miles Davis's classic '60s quintet. Throughout the set, DeJohnette sounds as powerful, unpredictable, and invigorating as ever, as his over-the-barline phrasing and dizzying full-kit timekeeping continues to stretch the boundaries of what can and can't be done in modern jazz. (ECM) **Michael Dawson**

TIPTON, ENTWISTLE & POWELL
EDGE OF THE WORLD

★★★★½

A potential bible for rock-cum-metal aficionados, this newly unearthed collection (recorded in 1977) from superstar trio TE&P is better than a Judas Priest side project has a right to be. Who bassist **John Entwistle** and heavy rock icon **COZY POWELL** were a surprisingly sympathetic team, locking in with such precision and white-knuckled fury that you wonder why Powell was never considered for Keith Moon's replacement in The Who. Like Entwistle, Powell has dominating technique revealed in full-set triplets and trademark pile-driving tom fills. But it's his bottomless groove that shows his true musicality and intense talent, which was sadly cut short in 1998. (Warner/Rhino) **Ken Micallef**

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ROOTS TONIC MEETS BILL LASWELL Sweet and heavy dub from rapper Matisyahu's band & bassist/producer Laswell, with Jonah David on skins. (ROIR)

THINK OF ONE TRÁFICO They're Belgian, but the hyper rhythms are far flung—and *flying*. (Crammed)

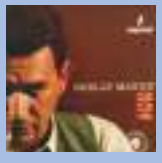
…AND THIS IS THE MODERN ROCK

SLOW MOTION REIGN S/T Produced by Serj Tankian of System Of A Down. Old-world feel, new-world beats, timeless hooks. Drums by Vigen Sayadian. (Serjical Strike)

CARDINALE 31:13 One swelling tidal wave of a high-drama song, think a metal-edged Mogwai. Drummer Keith Palumbo mans the slippery deck. (Arclight)

MY LATEST OBSESSION

CALEXICO'S **JOHN CONVERTINO** ON **SHELLY MANNE**'S 2-3-4



"A record I listen to often for inspiration is Shelly Manne's 1962 release *2-3-4*. Featuring Hank Jones on piano, this is one of the great piano/drum dialog records. In a *Modern Drummer* interview I read years ago, Shelly talked about how he loved old drumkits because the hardware was very simple, so there was less metal between himself and the drum. I took that to heart. You can hear Shelly's immediacy on this record. I love the way he stops and starts unexpectedly and keeps you transfixed within each part of the song. And I can tell too that he is a sound-effects guy; you hear all kinds of nature sounds in his playing…a certain kind of toughness hangs in there, like a *pow! biff! bam!* Yet he knows when to be completely silent. This is a great record to listen to right before you go on stage. Great communication, great telepathy—all the stuff I aspire to when I play drums with people."

Calexico's latest is *Garden Ruin*, on Quarter Stick Records.

TAKING THE REINS

BILLY KILSON'S BK GROOVE POTS AND PANS
On his second disc as leader, the celebrated kit man has penned tunes allowing his jazz/funk/fusion quartet to stretch chops to the max. Need we mention that Kilson's aggressive, laser-tuned drumming is mind-bending? (Arintha Star) **Jeff Potter**

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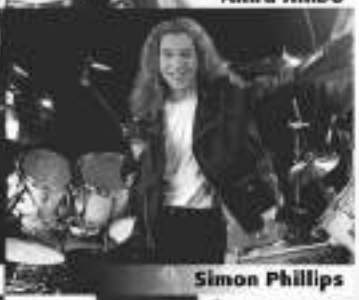
Simon Phillips

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Dave Weckl

Zoro

Photo of Steve Smith courtesy of Timothy Charles Ellis. Used by permission.

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WITCH WITCH

Pour in Black Sabbath's sludge-filled '70s epics, chop up bits of Led Zeppelin, and saturate with grunge guitar buzz, and you'd have the ingredients for the hard-rock sound of this New England quartet. Drummer **J. MASCIS** (former guitarist of Dinosaur Jr.) pounds plodding backbeats and big, slushy fills for these oddly anthemic songs. While Mascis's skin-bashing here might not be as intense as that from his Deep Wound hardcore-punk days, Witch nonetheless shows yet another dimension of the alternative icon's multifaceted musical personality. (Tee Pee) **Will Romano**

ANTHONY BRANKER & ASCENT SPIRIT SONGS

"Shy" is *not* a word that describes East Coast–based drummer **RALPH PETERSON**. Peterson's all over his kit on this sextet recording: Check the wild, open snare flams on "Spirit Song" or the nasty alternating reggae/funk hybrid pattern in "Imani (Faith)." Peterson's equally at home swinging on the Coltrane-inspired workouts as he is playing timbale-style accents during his solo in "Mentor." Add to that his satisfying, *real* drum sound (great kick tone), and you've got a winner. (Son Of Sound) **Ilya Stemkovsky**

BOB MINTZER BIG BIG BAND OLD SCHOOL: NEW LESSONS

If you've heard **JOHN RILEY** with The Village Vanguard Big Band or worked through one of his books, you may think you know this skilled drummer/teacher. Well, think again. *Old School…* captures every trill, fill, grace note, and snare crack of John's considerable arsenal as never before. Riley's gate is always like that of a gazelle, and he sets up every big band figure with a jeweler's care. Riley delivers a scalding samba/songo on "Mofongo," hits burning swing on "Runferyerlife," and navigates Elvin Jones' dark squalls on "Resolution." A stellar performance. (Manchester Craftsmen's Guild) **Ken Micallef**

OF FURTHER INTEREST

YES 9012LIVE (DVD)

Serious '80s flashback from reincarnated prog pioneers YES, circa 1985. Video production reflects era-specific techniques, while the band suffers from '80s fashion fallout. No matter. This musically innovative second-generation prog finds drummer **ALAN WHITE** driving the "Owner Of A Lonely Heart"–era Yes with commanding chops. Includes interesting, enlightening band interviews. (Image Ent.) **Mike Haid**

JUDAS PRIEST LIVE VENGEANCE '82 (DVD)

Classic live Priest footage, featuring the cream of the early catalog from the metal gods. Previously released on VHS as *Judas Priest Live*, and as part of the *Metalogy* box set. This long-standing JP lineup features the impressive, often underrated drumming of **DAVE HOLLAND**. (Sony/Legacy) **Mike Haid**

CHICK COREA ELEKTRIC BAND
LIVE AT MONTREUX 2004 (DVD)

Legendary keyboardist/composer Corea reunited the original Elektric Band lineup and toured to support their 2004 release, *To The Stars*. Though the material and performances are outstanding and include the classics "Got A Match?" and "Spain," **DAVE WECKL** fans will likely be disappointed with his camera time. Dave performs brilliantly throughout, though. (Eagle Rock) **Mike Haid**

MULTI-MEDIA

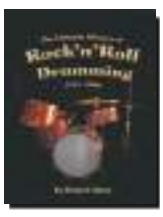
DRUM-TALK, VOLUMES ONE AND TWO BY LEWIS PRAGASAM

FOLDER WITH CD LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE $9.95

Much like the popular plasticized two-page computer/software guides, *Drum-Talk* is apparently marketed as a groove quick-reference. While the computer folders serve as quickie panic-soothing alternatives to thick manuals, the reasons for *Drum-Talk*'s meager format are puzzling. Ten bucks buys you a two-and-a-half-page listing of grooves with demo CD. For a few extra dollars, students would surely be better off choosing from the wide choice of current full-length, comprehensive groove books. Even worse, the "quickie" option is moot due to the regrettable omission of CD indexing numbers. A noted performer and educator, Mr. Pragasam presents correct, clear material. But the skimpy format and uncompetitive pricing do him a disservice. (Mel Bay) **Jeff Potter**

THE ULTIMATE HISTORY OF ROCK 'N' ROLL DRUMMING, 1948-2000 BY DANIEL GLASS

BOOK LEVEL: ALL $19.95



Royal Crown Revue drummer Daniel Glass offers a comprehensive overview of rock 'n' roll in this photo-less, 55-page soft-cover. Glass does a nice job covering a variety of substyles, and he finds room to mention many drummers otherwise lost to history. The information seems well-researched, though novices might more clearly understand the evolution of our art if more inches were given to the major innovators. (God bless Max Weinberg and Dave Weckl, but giving them equal space to Keith Moon and Ginger Baker in a history of *rock* drumming is misleading.) Glass should certainly be commended on his thorough explanation of rock sub-genres in terms of social and historical issues, though. (www.danielglass.com) **Joshua Parker**

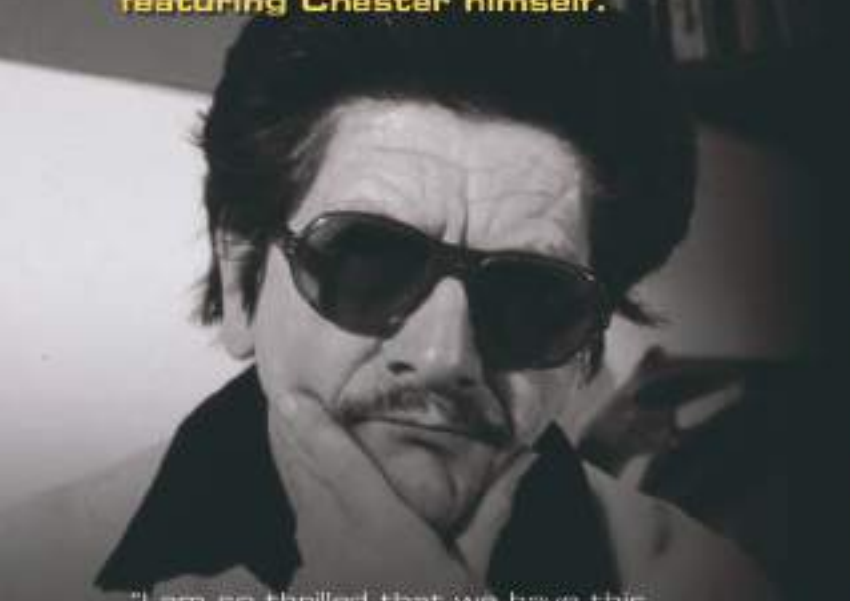
OPERATION: ROCKENFIELD, THE DRUMMING OF QUEENSRŸCHE BY JOE BERGAMINI

BOOK/CD LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE TO ADVANCED $24.95

Fans of drummer Scott Rockenfield's work with Queensrÿche will be delighted with this chronological collection of select drum transcriptions from the band's extensive catalog. There's lots of photos, interviews, and detailed accounts from Rockenfield, as he recalls the making of each LP, with drum diagrams and a gear list from each recording session. The accompanying CD features twelve newly recorded drum tracks from Rockenfield—classic QR drum charts that closely follow the transcriptions in the book. Just be warned: no music, just drums. (Carl Fischer) **Mike Haid**

The NEW NEW BREED: Gary Chester Speaks!

One of the drumming world's most popular and innovative books has received an upgrade. The New Breed, the classic book from legendary drummer/teacher Gary Chester, is now being released with a CD featuring Chester himself.



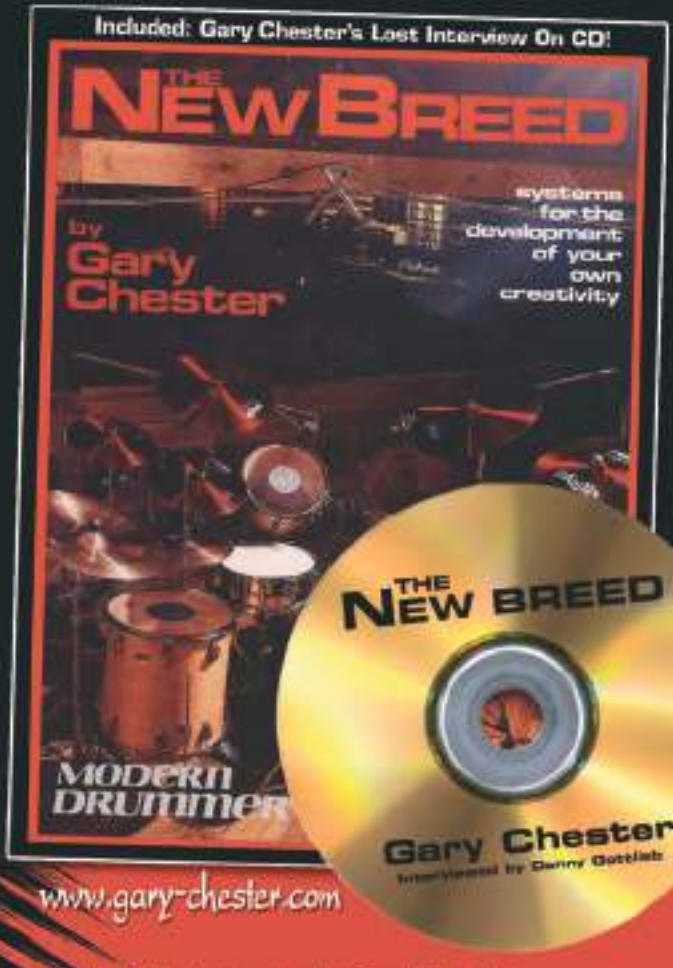
"I am so thrilled that we have this recording of Gary, with him going through his concepts, inspiring us all, in his own words."—**Danny Gottlieb**

"Thankfully, we drummers can be grateful and happy that there is audio of Gary speaking about the 'New Breed System.' Certainly, the dynamic of hearing the author speak makes the system very real, and very right for anyone not afraid to grow and to live with passion."—**Mike Mangini**

"Gary Chester was my teacher. While I studied with him he taught me some unique exercises that helped me improve as a drummer. I still use those exercises today. Amazing book, amazing teacher, and an amazing person."
—**Kenny Aronoff**

"The things I learned and skills I developed through Gary's studies are applied all the time. He systematically, yet subconsciously for the student, I believe, taught the drummer how to concentrate."—**Dave Weckl**

Included: Gary Chester's Last Interview On CD!



www.gary-chester.com

In 1984, three years before his death, Gary Chester sat down with drumming great Danny Gottlieb to discuss his unique concepts. The interview is fascinating. Among the many concepts Chester covered are:

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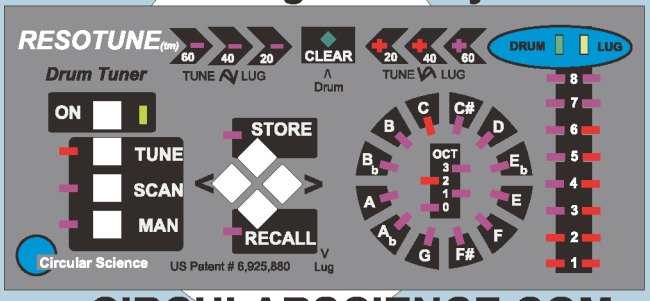

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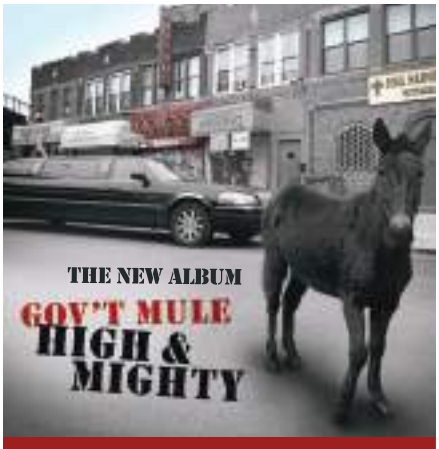

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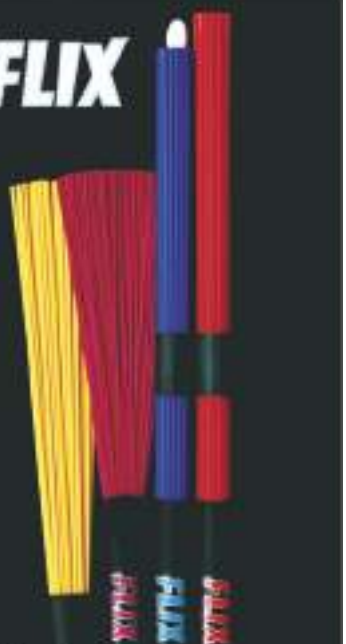

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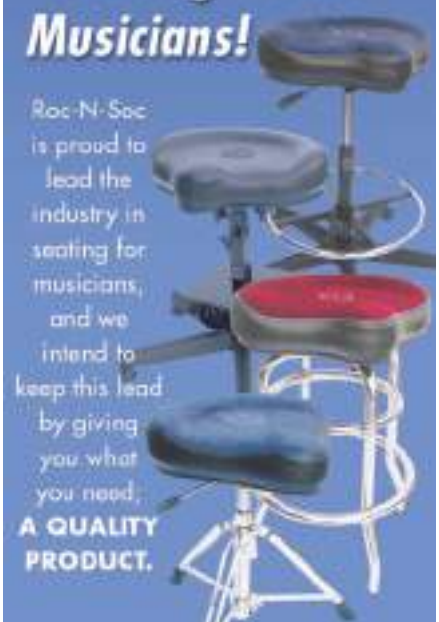

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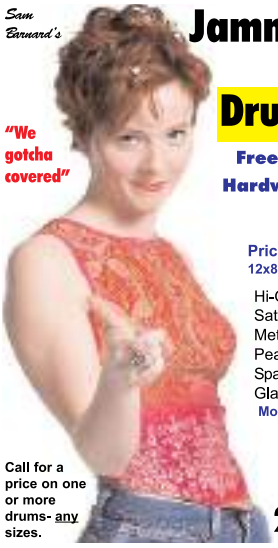

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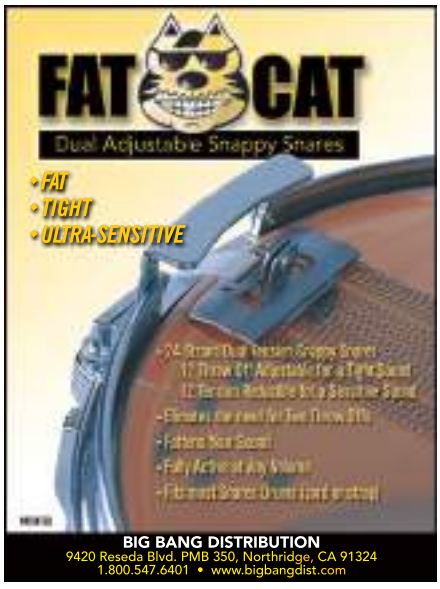

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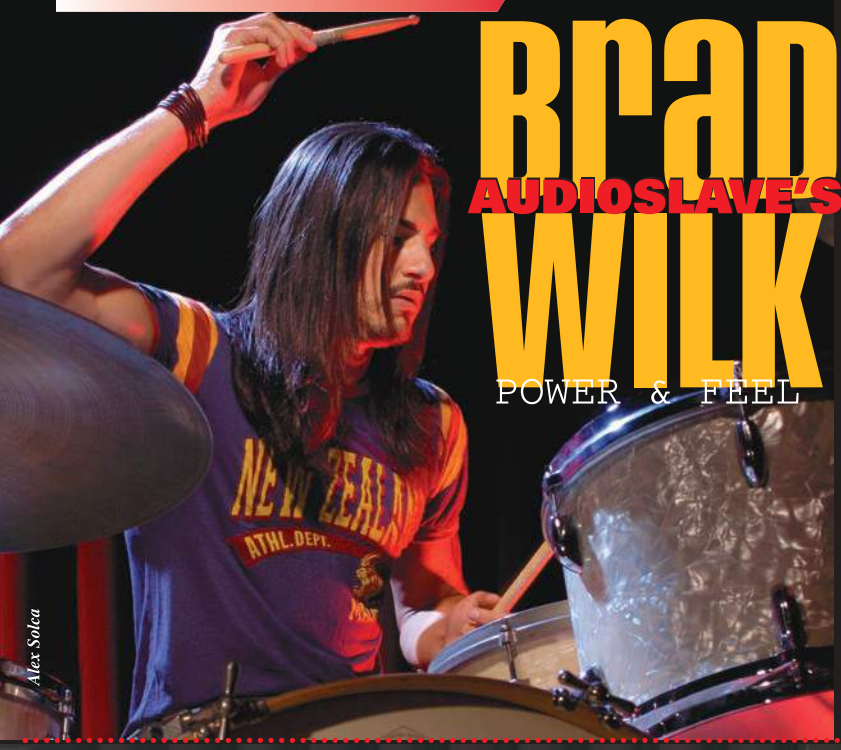

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Sonny Emory Drumset Camp

The first Sonny Emory Drumset Camp was held June 5–9 on the campus of Woodward Academy in the Atlanta, Georgia suburb of College Park. Students had a chance to study with local and international drummers and percussionists in group, classroom, and one-on-one environments. The buzzword around camp from the students and instructors alike was "inspiration."

The camp was organized by the ex-Earth, Wind & Fire drummer, along with his manager, Judy Davis Carroll, and Karen Hunt of KH Artists Group. Campers ranging in age from eleven to fifty came from as far away as California, New Mexico, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. Daily sessions ran from 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., with private lessons available each evening.

Staff instructors included Emory, Johnny Rabb, Yonrico Scott (Derek Trucks Band), and Lil' John Roberts (Janet Jackson). Visiting instructors from The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Georgia Tech University offered classical and symphonic performances. Percussionist Dave Holland conducted an enthusiastic drum circle.

Nightly performances were followed by meet-and-greet sessions with the artists. Performers included Emory, Bill Summers (Herbie Hancock), Johnny Rabb, Alex Acuña, Leon "Ndugu" Chancler, and Dennis Chambers.

"It's always been a dream of mine to have a specialty camp that focused primarily on drumset," says Emory. "My goal is to turn out quality players by exposing them to the great drummers that they see in videos and hear on recordings. This gives them the opportunity to get to know those drummers as people, and to learn, first-hand, how and why they were able to achieve such high levels of success." For more information, visit www.sonnye.com.

story and photos by Mike Haid

Sonny Emory leads campers in a drum circle.

Instructors included (from left) Lil' John Roberts, Johnny Rabb, Sonny, guest clinician Dennis Chambers, and Yonrico Scott.

Joey Kramer Fan Contest

Aerosmith drummer Joey Kramer and his band's management recently decided to turn a Drum Workshop photo shoot by rock photographer Rob Shanahan into a contest for the Aeroforce fan club. Grand-prize winners got to attend the shoot for a meet-and-greet and picture with Joey. Those winners traveled to Boston from Pennsylvania and Minnesota for the photo shoot. Ten additional winners received limited-edition prints of the ad signed by Joey and Rob.

From left: photographer Rob Shanahan, contest winner Beth Anne O'Toole, Joey Kramer, and contest winners Robin Burger, Brooke Mickelson, and Kevin O'Toole.

Rob Shanahan's final photo of Joey for the ad layout, which appears on page 82 of this issue.

Chicago Custom & Vintage Drum Show

The 16th annual International Custom And Vintage Drum Show commonly known as "The Chicago Show", was held May 20 and 21 at the Kane County Fairgrounds in St. Charles, Illinois. In addition to exhibits of eye-catching vintage and custom gear, the event featured clinics and performances from **Ed Shaughnessy**, **Daniel Glass, Donny Osborne**, and Chicago-area rocker/educator **Mike Semerau**. A special TV monitor system throughout the hall allowed attendees to view the clinics from multiple angles.

In addition, **William F. Ludwig II** and **William F. Ludwig III** were both on hand to represent the Ludwig Company's legacy in drum history. Raffle prizes and other support were provided by Thunder Echo Drum Company, Crescendo, Ghost Note, Sabian, Bosphorus, Turkmaster, Hal Leonard Publications, *Classic Drummer*, *Not So Modern Drummer*, Vaughncraft, Drum Supply House, Holland Drum Co., Joyful Noise, Craviotto, Pro-Mark, and Sabian.

The Chicago Show features a wide variety of current and historic drums.

Joyful Noise offers these vintage-style snares, engraved by John Aldridge.

These snare drums from Crescendo show how far custom artwork can go.

Indy Quickies

Bernard Purdie and R&B guitar legend Steve Cropper

R&B drumming great **Bernard Purdie** was honored this past June 10 on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday and fiftieth year in the music business. A celebratory performance, held as part of the Rhythm & Blues By The Brook festival in Plainfield, New Jersey, included Phoebe Snow, Steve Cropper, Eddie Floyd, Will Lee, "Blue Lou" Marini, and **Shawn Pelton**, along with Purdie himself.

Premier Percussion recently donated a "Spirit Of Lily" drumset to a benefit concert for The Evelina Children's Hospital Appeal and Camp Simcha, held at London's Old Billingsgate Fish Market. The "Spirit" model is a tribute to the "Pictures Of Lily" drumset that the company made for Keith

Moon of The Who in the 1960s. The donated kit—signed by Roger Daltrey and Pete Townshend of The Who, and with cymbals donated by **Zildjian**—was sold for £20,000 (about $10,000 US dollars).

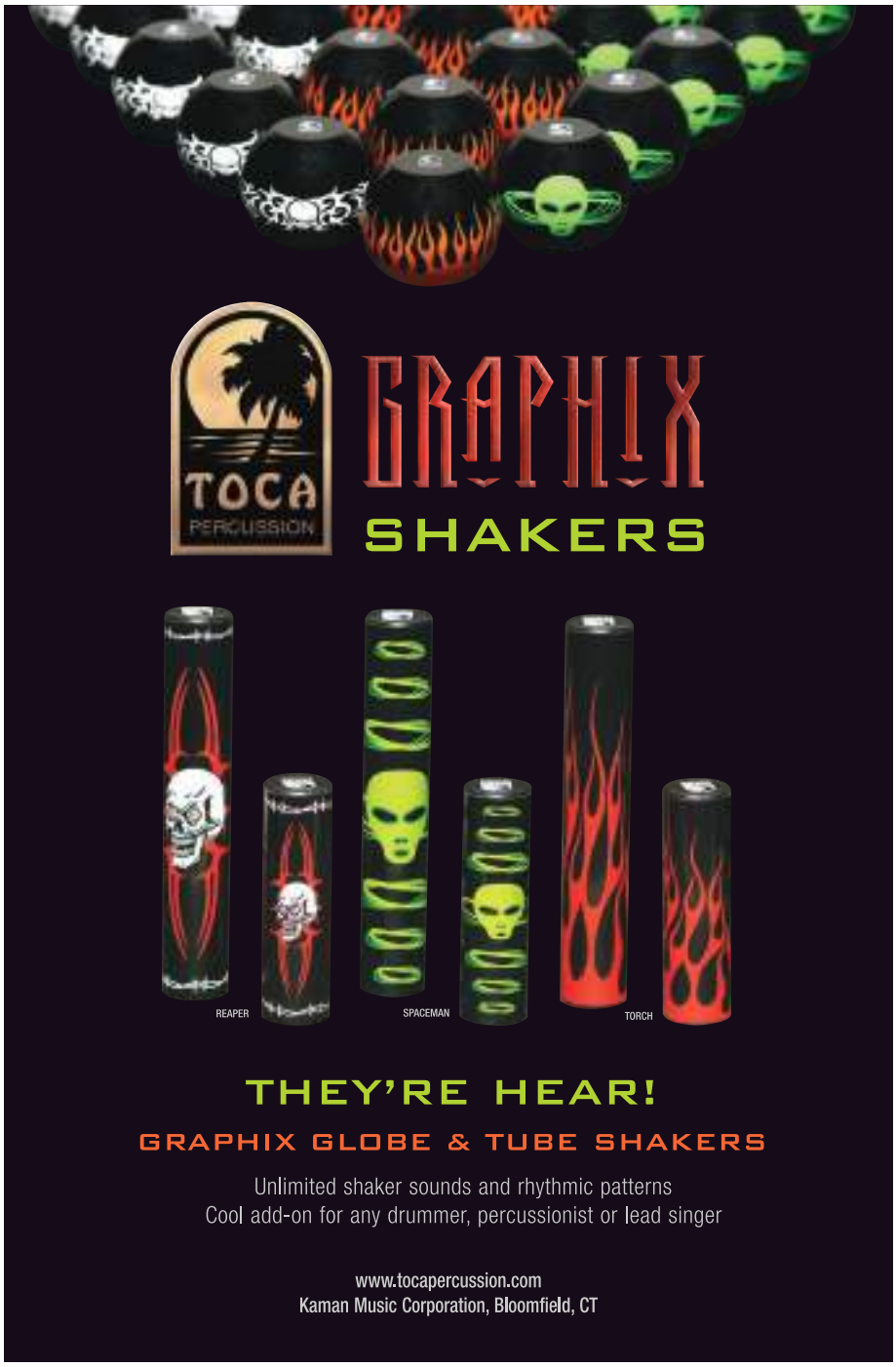
Keller Shells' Web site, www.kellershells.com, now offers downloadable audio podcasts that demonstrate its various drumshell models.

The 2006 **Montreal Drum Fest** will be held Saturday, November 11 and Sunday, November 12. Saturday's lineup will include **Yvette "Baby Girl" Preyer** (Michael McDonald), **Dom Famularo & Liberty DeVitto**, **Melena** (Cuban percussionist) with Cuba's **Raul Pineda** (drums), **Todd Sucherman** (Styx), **Clayton Cameron**, and **Gavin Harrison** (Porcupine Tree). Sunday will feature The Yamaha Rising Star Showcase, **Derico Watson** (Victor Wooten Band), **The Mark Kelso Trio**, **The Joey Heredia Trio** & **Sandy Perez**, **Bill Bruford** (Yes, King Crimson, Earthworks), **Bill Stewart** (John Scofield), and a concert performance by **Roy Haynes & His Quartet**. Information is available at www.montrealdrumfest.com.

Who's Playing What

Performer, educator, and drumming icon **Billy Cobham** is now an Evans drumhead artist.

Istanbul Agop now includes **Joey Waronker** (REM, Beck) and jazz veteran **Roy McCurdy** (Nancy Wilson) on its artist roster.



Trevor Lawrence (Macy Gray, Boys II Men, Dr. Dre, Stevie Wonder, Stanley Clarke) is playing Meinl cymbals.

Wally "Gator" Watson, **Charles Collins**, and **Ralph Penland** are using Squarebeat drumsticks.

New Vater artists include **Dustin Hengst** (Damone),

Nikki Glaspie (Beyoncé), **Paul Crosby** (Saliva), **Barry Alexander** (Jonny Lang), **Bob Ferarri** (The Pink Spiders), **Graham Broad** (Roger Waters), **Matt Lechevalier** (My Ruin), **Pat Pengelly** (Bedouin Soundclash), **Grant Taylor** (The Salads), and **Paoli Mejias**.

The DCI Division III World Champion **Raiders Drum & Bugle Corps** from Wayne, New Jersey is now using a full marching battery and front-line pit ensemble featuring Yamaha instruments.

Conn-Selmer has announced a new agreement with **Disney Youth Group Programs**, making it the official instrument provider to the Walt Disney World Performing Arts Programs. Included will be Ludwig drums and Musser mallet instruments.

David Fishof's

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Pack And Play

Jackson, Tennessee's Chris Schaff wanted to lighten his load when it came to gigging around with his 1950s vintage Slingerland kit. Chris figured that if he could eliminate the heavy tripod legs from the various stands on the kit, he could reduce their weight by several pounds.

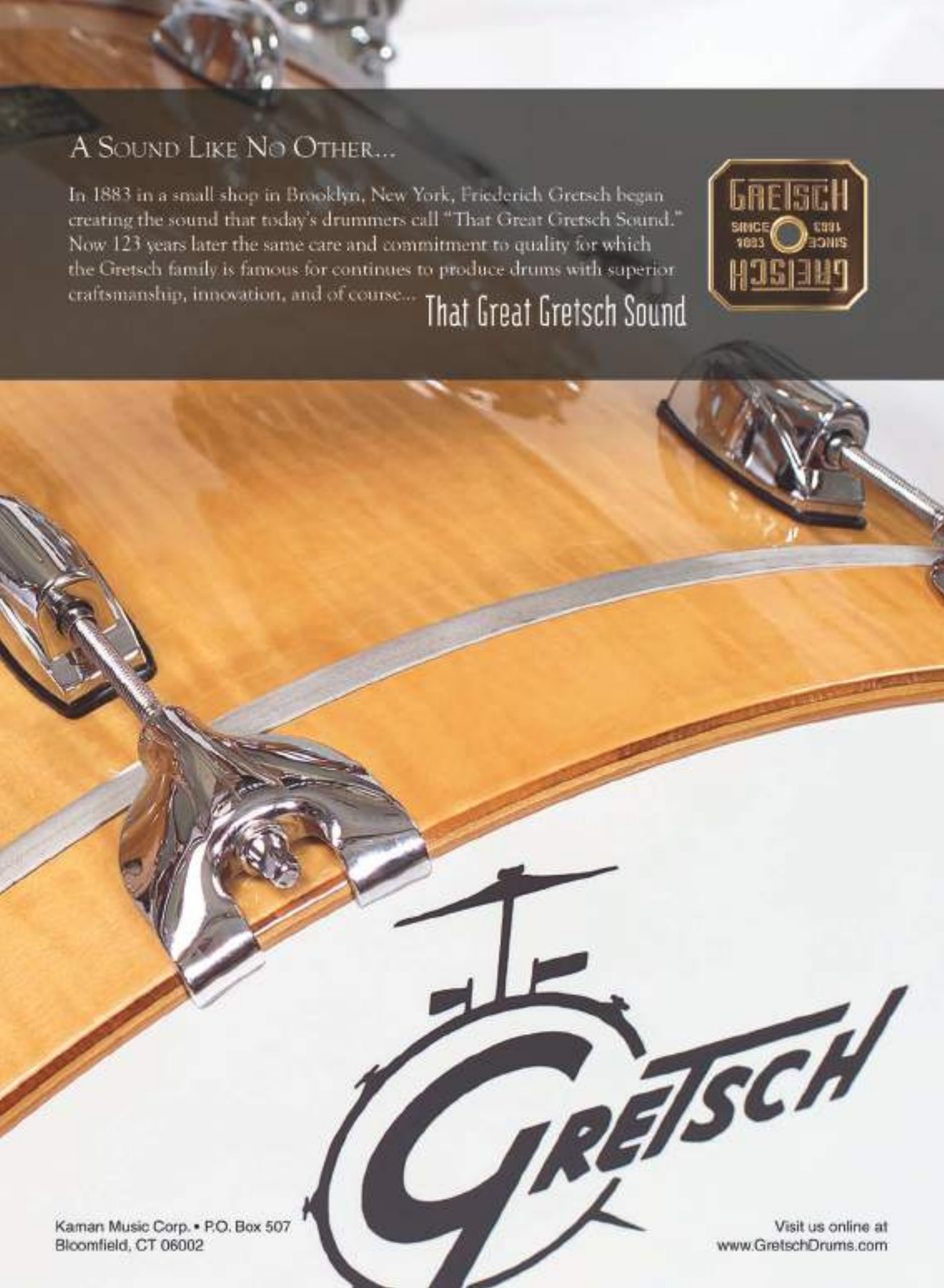
Chris devised a way to utilize his hardware cases not only to carry his stands, but also to support them while playing. The bottom of each vertical stand tube is fitted with a D-shaped plastic plug that fits into a corresponding hole in a plywood board in the bottom of each case. This prevents the stands from rotating under playing impact.

"I've been using this setup on weekend gigs," says Chris, "and it works well. I hope to partner with someone who can help me get my design on the market. I'd welcome any feedback at schaff7@juno.com."

PHOTO REQUIREMENTS

1. Photos must be high-quality and in color. 35mm slides or high-resolution (300 dpi) digital photos are preferred; color prints will be considered; Polaroids not accepted. 2. You may send more than one view of the kit. 3. Only show drums, no people. 4. Shoot drums against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds. 5. Clearly highlight special attributes of your kit.

Send photo(s) to: Kit Of The Month, Modern Drummer, 12 Old Bridge Road, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009-1288. Photos cannot be returned.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1

FLAT RIDE: For years, many Jazz drummers have used two ride cymbals to multiply the tonal colors of their playing. The 20" ZHT Flat Ride is designed to provide you with a controlled array of glassy tones and clear, clean stick definition that works exceptionally well alongside your regular Ride cymbals.

2

EFX: By adding a series of cutouts to the cymbal, the ZHT EFX cymbals produce a short, trashy sound that is a cross between a crash and china. These blend easily with your existing crashes for varied accent sounds. Available in 16" and 18" sizes.

3

MINI HI-HATS: Designed in conjunction with drumming phenom Marco Minnemann, these little guys are primarily for auxiliary use, and add a very digital dimension to your set-up. Their quick and tight response allows intricate sticking to be heard clearly. Excellent for recording due to their precise and focused sound. Available in 8" and 10" sizes.

4

CHINAS: When you want to cut through with trashy power, you need a China. Played with the edge facing up (as shown), you can produce cutting, high frequency strikes on the edge and bright bell tones. Played with the edge facing down, the tones are dark and you can get an explosive stick contact sound by striking on the shoulder of the flat area under the flange. Available in 16" and 18" sizes.

5

ZHT EFFECTS PACK: This Factory Matched Set contains an 18" China and a 16" EFX. A very cost effective first step toward expanding your set-up.

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